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STARTS THIS SATURDAY

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1998 WORLD CUP FINAL

# Goodbye to all that: our free universities are history

Lucy Ward and Fran Abrams

Twenty years of free university education came to an end yesterday as the Government announced the introduction of loans for university fees.

The announcement, which followed the completion of Sir Ron Dearing's 14-month inquiry into higher education, means that graduates from all but the poorest backgrounds will have to pay up to £3,000 towards the cost of their degree, on top of bills for living costs.

The changes, which have been welcomed by universities but fiercely opposed by student leaders, will still leave graduates from the wealthiest families with smaller debts than their poorer counterparts. And they raise the prospect of "golden hellos" for brightest graduates from employers prepared to repay their fees.

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, told MPs yesterday that he planned to abolish maintenance grants and to make graduates from better-off families pay £1,000 per year towards their fees. The move will mean that students whose parents earn less than £34,000 could leave university with debts of around £10,300. Those from richer families can still expect parental contributions, which will reduce their debts to around £8,000. Details will be published in a White Paper in the Autumn, but it seems likely that graduates might start repayments when they begin earning more than £10,000.

The Government's announcement marked a rejection of Sir Ron's main recommendations on funding. His committee decided that students should all pay a £1,000 fee and that means-tested grants should stay.

Mr Blunkett promised yesterday that the move

What it may cost you			
What parents and graduates will pay under the Government's proposals:			
Family income	£16,000	£23,000	£35,000
Maintenance (mmt) loan	3,440	3,440	2,685
Parental contribution (mmt)	0	0	755
Parental contribution (fees)	0	878	1,000
Total debt after three years	10,320	10,320	8,055

\* Based on students studying outside London

would mean more money both for universities and for further education colleges, but he did not promise that the extra income would be ring-fenced. Universities have insisted that the depth of their funding crisis means the Government must plough all new money from fees and savings on grants back into higher education.

Although Sir Ron did not demand more input from employers, his recommendations cannot be implemented without their help. His report says that courses should relate more closely to the world of work.

In return for extra cash, universities will be expected to accept far tighter controls on the quality of teaching they offer. Students should be given a clearer idea of what they will learn before they

start, and for the first time tutors will be expected to serve a probationary period in which they must gain teaching qualifications.

Making his announcement yesterday, Mr Blunkett warned universities that he would not tolerate the imposition of top-up fees by elite universities on top of the new loans. However, some were still threatening to introduce the charges last night. Both Durham and Nottingham universities - two of a group of six Britain's old universities which have placed warnings of possible top-up fees in their prospectuses - confirmed they would make no decision on lifting the threat until the government's full funding plans became clear.

Stephen Dorrell, the Conservative education spokesman, said the news would be greeted with

disappointment in Britain's universities. "That disappointment will turn to anger when they realise the scale of the lost opportunity which the Government has allowed to pass and the scale of Mr Blunkett's defeat at the hands of the Chancellor of the Exchequer," he said.

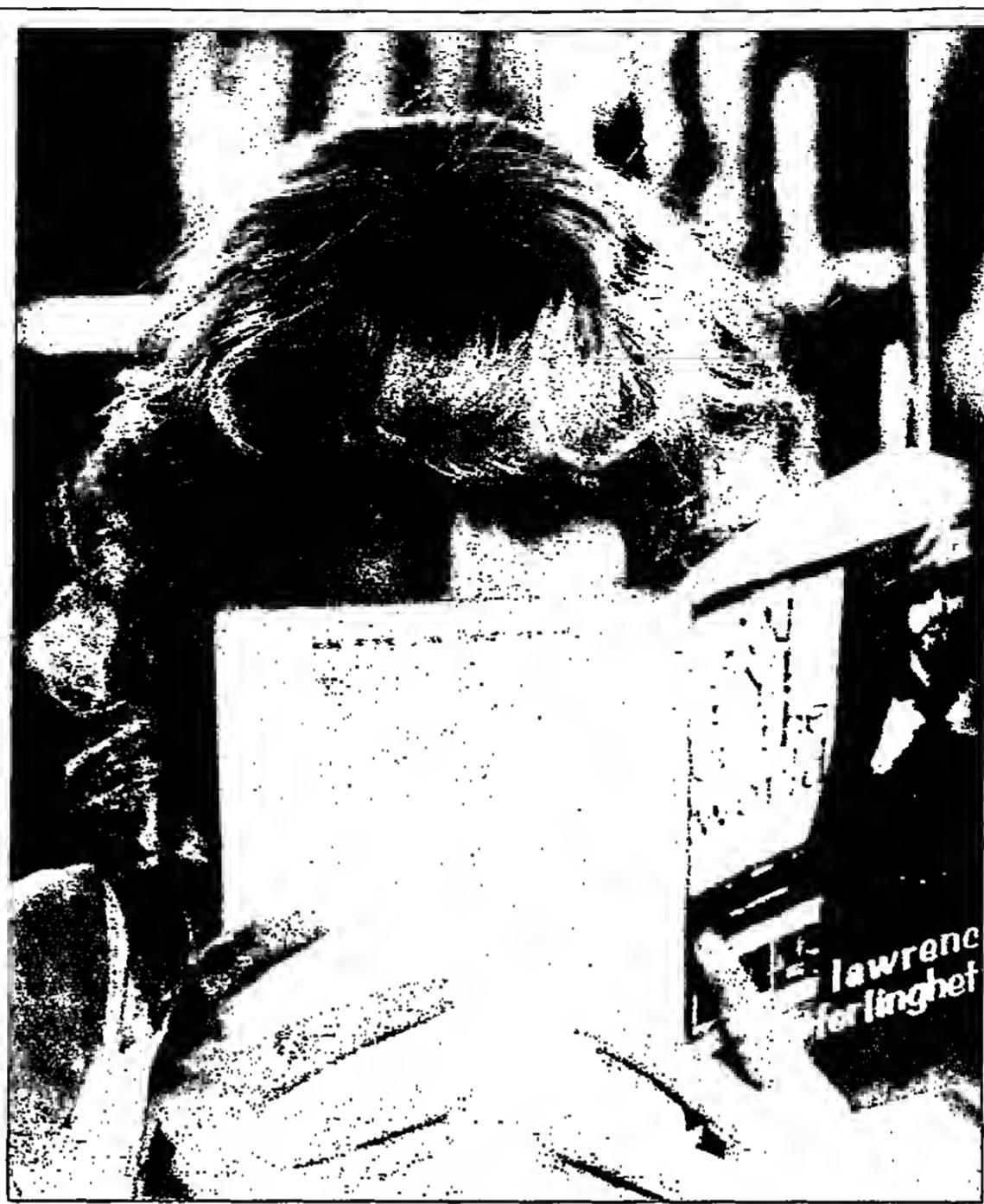
The Liberal Democrat education spokesman, Don Foster, welcomed the Dearing committee's proposals to expand student numbers and widen access to higher education, but denied tuition fees were the answer to the university funding shortfall. Students should pay more, but the money should come through abolishing maintenance grants in favour of loans, he said.

Dearing Report details, page 10  
Leading article, page 17

The graduate: Loans for fees would leave poorer students, like the working-class woman played by Julie Walters in *Educating Rita*, with larger debts than their better-off counterparts

The general secretaries, and colleagues known to sympathise with them, lead unions holding 45 per cent of the vote at the party conference, and represent the full range of opinions in the union movement. Even the Thatcher government was rarely able to produce such unanimity between right and left.

Opposition has also come from constituency organisations. Around a third of them have put forward resolutions to the annual conferences calling for the whole project to be delayed. Union leaders agreed on Tuesday that their "bonhomie" in any future dealings with the Labour leadership should be no diminution of union input into the NEC or into the new policy forums.



Unions  
draw up  
secret plan  
to take  
on Blair

Barrie Clement  
Labour Editor

Trade-union leaders are preparing to confront Tony Blair at Labour's annual conference, after a clandestine meeting of six of the biggest unions agreed a united front against proposed party reforms.

The general secretaries, whose unions contributed most of Labour's election expenses, met at a London hotel on Tuesday. One of those present said they had "drawn a line in the sand" over Mr Blair's plans to distance Labour from union benefactors. They have been excluded from Downing Street since the election, and do not expect to be asked to discuss the matter.

This makes a row at the autumn conference between old and new Labour unavoidable unless the leadership compromises on key points. Party figures meet today to draft a final document to go before the Labour national executive on Wednesday.

The *Independent* has been told the secret union session involved Rodney Bickerstaffe of the Unison public-service union, John Edmonds of the GMB general union, Roger Lyons of MSF, Ken Jackson of the engineering union, Jimmy Knapp of the RMT transport union and Tony Duggins of the GPMU print union.

Bill Morris, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, was not present but has attended previous meetings of the secret grouping, which was formed in February after the Labour national executive (NEC) released its "Party into Power" consultative document proposing fundamental reforms.

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## DPP wrong on police death charge

Patricia Wynn Davies  
Legal Affairs Editor

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Barbara Mills, yesterday conceded in a landmark case that she had been wrong to rule out a manslaughter charge against two police officers after a man died in their custody.

The Police Complaints Authority likewise accepted in the High Court that its decision not to recommend that the Metropolitan Police bring disciplinary charges against the officers, Constables Paul Wright and Andrew McCallum, was "flawed" and should be quashed.

The unprecedented concession

sions were made at the opening of four linked judicial reviews of Crown Prosecution Service decisions not to prosecute officers for death or serious injury, and mean that Mrs Mills and the authority must now re-consider whether to take action over the death of Nigerian-born Shijil Lapite during an incident in Stoke Newington, north London, in December 1994.

The legal challenge, the first of its kind, has also revealed how the Metropolitan Police strenuously resisted the authority's initial inclination to recommend that the officers be charged with disciplinary offences, and persuaded it to change its mind.

A CPS statement said that Mrs Mills, who had approved a decision by Robert Munday, a Principal Crown Prosecutor,

not to prosecute, had decided to invite the court to quash the original decision in the light of material submitted by Mrs Jones' lawyers. In yet another significant concession, it added: "The CPS has accepted that there may have been a weakness in the decision-making process and has therefore asked a senior lawyer from the north of England to re-review this case."

Patologists' reports revealed that Mr Lapite had suffered 36 to 45 separate injuries during the incident with the two officers. At the inquest, PC Wright admitted applying a neck-hold that fractured his larynx, causing him to die of suffocation. PC

McCallum admitted kicking Mr Lapite twice on the head, as hard as he could. The officers claimed that Mr Lapite had attempted to strangle PC Wright. When the case reached the CPS, it insisted that the constriction of Mr Lapite's neck might have been caused unintentionally by PC Wright's arm having become accidentally entangled in Mr Lapite's clothing, forming a ligature.

Ben Emmerson, counsel for Mrs Jones, told the court yesterday that Mrs Mills accepted in a recent letter that pathologists' evidence could not support such a theory. She also accepted that a legal mistake

had been made, relating to the elements of the offence of "unlawful act" manslaughter.

The seeds of the separate challenge against the Police Complaints Authority's decision were sown after Commander Ian Quinn of the Metropolitan Police's Complaints Investigation Bureau, submitted a detailed response to the supervising member, Molly Meacher, opposing the bringing of charges. On the basis of the point he made, which included a material error involving the transposition of two pathologists' names, Mrs Meacher sought an opinion from counsel and then changed her mind.

## Workers' paradise delivers the goods

Michael Harrison

The captains of British industry were yesterday taught the secret of business success - sit back and let the workers run the company. At Ken Lewis's sheet metal-working firm in Stoke, Bedfordshire, the staff decide their own salaries and hours of work, set their own budgets and double as salesmen, cost accountants and quality control inspectors.

Mr Lewis, managing director of Dutton Engineering (Woodside) Ltd, says: "I don't think I've made a decision for two years. I've not had to sack any-

body and I've only ever had to discipline one chap and as it happens he brought in a £300,000 contract the other week."

The 28 staff work in teams of seven and decide their own work patterns, and when to take a long weekend to go fishing instead of slaving over a hot press.

There are no workers' committees or trade unions, and overtime is an alien concept. The average salary is £16,500 but at the end of every month 20 per cent of the profits are shared out among staff.

Mr Lewis got the idea after a visit to Japan in 1984. "It's just

common bloody sense," he says. "Too much British management is devoid of common sense. I am a happy man and so is everyone else because people's quality of life has gone up. We work smart, not hard."

His recipe for commercial success was spelt out yesterday to 120 business leaders at a competitiveness summit in London, organised by Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade. In case they were sceptical, he had come armed with the statistics - sales per employee twice the industry average, paperwork reduced by 70 per cent, lead times cut

from six weeks to eight hours, reject rate down to a fraction of a decimal point and, best of all, a £250,000 overdraft turned into a positive bank balance. Mr Lewis has no doubts his philosophy will catch on. He gets 600 visitors a year and last week entertained a delegation from Kuwait.

Since the business now runs without him, Mr Lewis can afford to spend his time going around the country, proselytising and promoting his book, *How to Transform Your Company and Enjoy It*. "I don't think I am ever going to retire. I enjoy being a missionary too much."



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## news

## significant shorts

**Childminder convicted of killing four-month-old girl**

A registered childminder was yesterday convicted of killing a four-month-old girl in her care.

Angela Lee, 46, allegedly lost her temper with Danielle Firth and smashed her head against a hard surface, causing fatal fractures to her skull. A jury at Leeds Crown Court took four hours to convict Lee, who has two children of her own, of manslaughter. She had pleaded not guilty to murder, initially claiming that Danielle fell on a plastic castle, then saying that she accidentally dropped the baby on her head. But a post mortem examination found five separate areas of bruising to the child's face, including her left eyebrow, ear, nose and jaw line.

**Crew malaise grounds BA flights**

British Airways flights from Heathrow continue to be disrupted with 1,000 cabin crew off sick – double the usual number. The high absence rate, which originally coincided with the recent three-day strike, led to the cancellation of two long-haul flights yesterday and six short-haul services are likely to be grounded today. Management predicted there would be two long-haul cancellations tomorrow, on Saturday and on Sunday. Yesterday the airline said it would consider proposals to save £4.2m from cabin crew costs tabled by the Transport and General Workers' Union, the issue at the centre of the industrial action. The union has given the company until 8 August to reach a settlement.

Barrie Clement

**Schoolgirl expelled for complaining**

A schoolgirl has been expelled from school after complaining about the standard of teaching.

Sarah Briggs, 15, was banned from Queen Elizabeth's School, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, after claiming the comprehensive had failed to make crucial changes recommended in a report by Ofsted, the education regulator. Together with three other pupils, she alleged she was failing behind in her GCSE work, citing one of the main reasons as teacher absenteeism. The other two pupils apologised, but Sarah, of Pleasley, near Mansfield, said: "I am standing by my comments." In a letter to Sarah's parents, Susan, 40, and David, 43, the headteacher of the school, Nicola Atkin, said Sarah had been "excluded" because of her comments, which bring the school into "disrepute", and for "serious disrespectful conduct towards staff in school". A spokesman at the school said neither the headteacher nor teaching staff were prepared to comment.

**Happy Days are here again**

A £2m theatre production of the hit television series *Happy Days* is heading for Britain, it was announced yesterday.

*Happy Days – The Musical* is being written by the star of the original show, Henry Winkler (pictured) alias The Fonz, the cool hoodlum who only had to snap his fingers to be surrounded by adoring girls.

The show will feature hit tunes from the Fifties and early Sixties, with compositions by lyricist David Capri. The *Happy Days* series, about a group of American high-school students, ran for 11 years from the mid-Seventies and was a huge hit in the UK. The musical is scheduled for a West End premiere in autumn 1998.

Patricia Wynn Davies

**Clear signal on human rights law**

Lord Irvine, the Lord Chancellor, last night gave the clearest signal yet that the Government will adopt the weakest form of incorporation when the European Convention on Human Rights is made part of UK law. Lord Irvine told the Lord Mayor's judges' dinner: "Incorporating basic human rights into our domestic law will be a major new departure. It must not disturb the supremacy of Parliament." The remarks indicate that incorporation along the lines of the system in New Zealand is in prospect, in which judges would have no power to disapply primary legislation. Under such a system it would be for Parliament to pass amending legislation if a violation of the convention were found.

Patricia Wynn Davies

**Jail for man in Aga Khan plot**

An asylum seeker from Cameroon who tried to cheat the Aga Khan out of £25,000 was jailed yesterday for six months.

A court heard how a letter from the millionaire racehorse owner was intercepted and altered on its way to his bank in Geneva. The fraudsters forged instructions for the money to be sent to a branch of Barclays Bank in south London, said Keith Stone, for the prosecution, at Inner London Crown Court. Guy Rene Eyene, 37, living in Stockwell, south-west London, told the court he was recruited by accomplices to pick up the money from the bank for a £2,000 fee.

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## people



Rich reward: Antonia Balint at yesterday's award ceremony (Photograph: Reuters)

**Crowning glory for beauty queen stripped of her title**

**S**ix years almost to the day since she was disqualified as Miss Hungary for having posed naked, beauty queen Antonia Balint was reawarded her crown yesterday after winning a court case

Ms Balint and second-placed Tímea Rába were both disqualified immediately after the 1991 pageant when Hungarian newspapers printed photographs that had previously appeared in the men's magazine *Lui* and other publications. Erich Reit, the man who wrote the rules for Miss World, said Ms Balint should hand her prize back. The local organisers, Multimedia, then re-claimed the two contestants' prize money and named third-placed Orsolya Michna as the new Miss Hungary, sending her to the Miss World finals in London.

"I felt it was a huge injustice at the time because there was nothing in the contract I signed which said I'd done anything wrong," Ms Balint said as she clutched her sceptre after yesterday's award ceremony.

"The rule had been completely mistranslated in the contract we signed with Multimedia," Ms Balint's lawyer Katalin Kiszely said. "Instead of the clause about not being allowed to pose nude there was a sentence saying contestants who had done such pictures should not allow other magazines to publish them during the competition."

Ms Balint was to have received a Renault Clio as well but never saw it. She refused to hand over the crown and sceptre and locked them away for six years in her parents' home.

A Budapest court finally ruled this month that Multimedia had misled Ms Balint, and awarded her damages plus the price of the Renault car plus interest, estimated at a total of \$30,000 (£18,000) – allowing her to take the crown out of storage.

"It's been frustrating not to be able to look at it for six years but I can finally call it mine," she said.

Duncan Shiels, Reuters

**Death-fall climbers were posing for photographs**

Two British climbers who were killed after falling into a ravine had stopped on a ledge to pose for photographs, French police said yesterday.

Mark Haseler and Clare Kempster, both in their thirties, plunged 3,000ft from the Aiguille Bionnassay on the French-Italian border of Europe's highest peak on Monday.

The pair were roped together and posing for the picture when Ms Kempster leaned over a snow-covered ledge to stop her rucksack sliding down the mountain side. She slipped over the edge pulling the Mr Haseler with her.

The third member of the group had untied himself to take the picture and escaped unharmed along with three other members of the climbing group – thought to include other members of the London-based Rock Hoppers club.

Marc Dubrule, of the Chamonix mountain police, said: "There were three British climbers roped

together as they made their way up Mont Blanc. They reached a ridge, with Italy on one side and France on the other, where there is a very beautiful view, and they apparently decided to get a photograph of themselves with the view in the background."

"One of them released himself from the rope, and the other two stepped back for the photo."

"At this point, the woman lost her rucksack, and it started sliding down the slope. She tried to catch on to it and fell, pulling the other climber with her. I believe that they were killed immediately."

The deaths are among the first this year on the 15,000ft glacial peak which is known as "the accursed mountain" by locals.

Andy MacNan of the British Mountaineering Council, of which the Mountain Hoppers is a member, said: "You could say this was a freak accident. It is quite a straightforward climb for experienced mountaineers but like any mountain it is a very serious place to be."

Kate Watson-Smyth

**World accolade for Bournemouth**

When Dennis Isaacs, a competition winner, was given the chance to take a £10,000 holiday anywhere in the world there was only one option.

Forget the exotic delights of Borneo, the Bermuda sun or the nightlife of Ibiza; caretaker Mr Isaacs, 71, only had eyes for Britain – and Bournemouth in particular.

He has chosen to spend his Barclays Bank prize on a trip to the Dorset resort, supplemented with a coach tour of the Scottish Highlands and a visit to Guernsey.

Mr Isaacs, from King's Lynn, Norfolk, who will be accompanied by his wife Kathleen, 60, said: "I prefer not to get into the hassle of travelling abroad ... A holiday is all about relaxing and we want to go where we feel we can relax ... the idea of all this exotic sun and sand doesn't really appeal."

Liz Mickelthwaite, spokeswoman for Bournemouth Borough Council, said she was "delighted".

"We have beautiful beaches and gardens, clubs, pubs, a variety of accommodation and the New Forest is just on our doorstep – what more could you want?"

Michael Streeter

## briefing

## EVOLUTION

**Double asteroid-hit may have caused mass extinction**

Two huge asteroid impacts on the Earth may have led to mass extinction of species 35 million years ago, according to new research. The collisions occurred within a few hundred thousand years of each other – a brief pause, in geological terms.

The "dinosaur killer" asteroid, which hit the Gulf of Mexico, had already occurred: that happened about 65 million years ago. But the "double whammy" of asteroid impacts would have led to widespread species extinction by throwing up huge quantities of dust into the atmosphere, changing the global climate abruptly.

Scientists had known for some time of the impacts, the first of which was in Siberia, visible now as the 100-kilometre wide Popigai crater. But they disagreed about the date, putting it at anything between five million and 65 million years. But now a new study of rocks melted by the impact has narrowed the date down to 35.7 million years ago. A few hundred thousand years later, another huge object from space smashed into Chesapeake Bay in the US. The collisions were just before the so-called "Eocene cataclysm" – marked by an abrupt reduction in biodiversity. The findings, by a team led by Richard Grieve of the Geological Survey of Canada in Ottawa, appear today in the science journal *Nature*.

Charles Arthur

## SCIENCE

**Trekkies brought down to Earth**

It turns out that *Star Trek's* Mr Scott was right when he would tell Captain Kirk: "Warp Factor Nine?" But Captain, the engines canna take it!" The reason being that physicists have, yet again, quashed hopes of building a spaceship that could travel faster than light.

Why? Because they have calculated that to work, it would require more energy than is contained in the universe. Not so much Warp Factor Nine, as Warp Factor None.

The hopes of Trekkies were raised three years ago when Miguel

Alcubierre, then at the University of Wales in Cardiff, suggested that a faster-than-light starship might be possible. Although the laws of physics do not allow an object to travel faster than light, he suggested that the same effect could be produced by "shrinking" space in front of the craft, and "expanding" that behind to make the destination closer and the departure point further away, propelling the spaceship faster than light.

However, Mitchell Pines

and Larry Ford, at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts used Einstein's general theory of relativity to work out that the total amount of negative energy needed to sustain such a warp would have to be about 10 billion times the energy locked up in all the visible mass of the universe. Professor Ford told *New Scientist* magazine: "I don't think it's very likely anyone will find a way to do this."

Charles Arthur

## HEALTH SERVICES

**London tops abortion league**

Abortion rates in London are twice the national average, according to the first comprehensive report into abortion and contraceptive services.

Each day, 170 women in London have an abortion, and a further 350 take the "morning-after" pill. The Health of Londoners Project says that of the 400 women who become pregnant every day in London, only half intend to – but high levels of late abortions, and the fact that in some places fewer than half of abortions are funded by the NHS, suggests that there is difficulty obtaining access to the service. "Our report shows a patchwork of NHS services with almost a complete lack of co-ordination between family planning clinics and GPs, particularly in the inner-city areas where the need is greatest," said Dr Bobbie Jacobson, director of Public Health for East London and the City Health Authority.

*Contraception and Abortion in London: Are we meeting the need?*, from Health of Londoners Project, East London & The City Health Authority, Tredegar House, 97-99 Bow Road, London E3 2AN, £13. Glenda Cooper

## RACE DISCRIMINATION

**Second generation still suffering bias**

Minority groups are continuing to pay an "ethnic penalty", enduring worse employment and housing prospects than their white counterparts.

According to the Office for National Statistics, there is little evidence that less discrimination is suffered by second-generation groups than their parents. Among the second generation, the relative chances of black Caribbean men in competition for places in the two topmost social classes were only 75 per cent of British-born whites of the same age and qualifications. In the competition to avoid unemployment their relative chances were down to 43 per cent. And analysing figures from the 1991 census, the ONS concludes more than 200,000 households would have to move home if the distribution of housing was to be equal, with ethnic groups less likely to own their own homes and more likely to have the worst living conditions.

*Ethnicity in the 1991 Census: Volume Four from the Stationery Office £29.95 and The Tables Are Bare, report available from the MFS, 50 Southwark Street, London, SE1 1UN, £5.*

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# Radio 4 chief girds up for battle to save his audience

Paul McCain  
Media Correspondent

Radio 4 controller James Boyle will stand in the Art Deco boardroom at the BBC's London headquarters today and tell the governors the station needs to change because half its audience only listen to the *Today* programme, *The World at One* and *The Archers*.

Research already presented to groups like the Confederation of British Industry, the Consumers' Association and the Guild of Cookery Writers shows Radio 4 loses as many as 620,000 listeners the minute *Today* finishes.

After *The World at One* as many as 400,000 listeners turn off and almost half a million disappear when *The Archers* ends. This means Radio 4's audience declines faster in the mornings than the rest of the country's radio stations. Most other stations see a slow decline from the mornings to the end of the day, but Radio 4's audience falls from a peak of 2.2 million to 500,000 in two hours.

Mr Boyle's research, seen by *The Independent*, shows half Radio 4's audience listen to other stations more than they listen to Radio 4. Loyalty to programmes is weak - except for news programmes. Radio 4's audience only tunes into the same slots once or twice a week.

Mr Boyle is also concerned that the average age of the station is 53, and of the 8.3 million people who listen in a week only 1.2 million are under 35. He wants to reverse a trend that has seen younger listeners move to Radio 5 Live.

The research also confirms that Radio 4's audience is overwhelmingly English. Only 500,000 of listeners hail from Scotland or Northern Ireland.

For the changes, and against



Alan Coren, humorist: "Identify Radio 4 as a constituency, or a country, more than a radio station."

Janet Suzman, writer and campaigner: "Leave Radio 4 alone. There is nothing quite like that in the whole world. Why make it like the dumbing-down radio stations?"

Steve Barnatt, lecturer in media studies: "We must rely on the good judgement and integrity of the controller."

Iris Murdoch, writer: "Keep it old-fashioned ... don't bring it up to date."

Brian Sewell, art critic: "Most of people who listen to Radio 4 are museum pieces. I am a museum piece, it is going to be spoilt if it is changed. Just get rid of the *Archers* and *Karen* discospe and I'll be content."

Anita Brookner, writer: "Want more seriousness ... more talks, more lectures ... more information basically about the world."

Research by Agnes Seaverin

can get details of the schedule before it goes on air in April. It will also advertise the daytime number in the national press.

Mr Boyle will tell the governors he wants to build on what is good about the station and apply a few modern scheduling techniques. Because *Today* is so successful he will extend it to take in *Farming Today* and *Yesterday in Parliament*.

This has attracted the wrath of MPs, but by airing *Today in Parliament* late at night the BBC is within its charter obligations in covering Parliament and if he is brave Mr Boyle can ignore Speaker Betty Boothroyd's "expression of concern". To stop the switch-off by 620,000 listeners when *Today* ends, the 9am slot is to be refreshed so that Melvyn Bragg's *Start the Week* will turn into a celebrity chat show. *Midweek* may go altogether, and *The Moral Maze* will be moved to evenings.

*Woman's Hour* is likely to move to a 10am start to provide the cement in the morning schedule. A mid-morning drama has also been reported.

The consumer-affairs programme *You and Yours* may be revamped and the unloved *Afternoon Shift* is likely to go so that *PM* can move to a 4pm start time. The "more of a good thing" philosophy will be extended to *The Archers*, which will get another episode on a Saturday and a longer Sunday omnibus edition.

Saturday mornings, are deemed as ripe areas to pick up listeners so Cliff Morgan's *Sport of Four* may go as will the anomaly of having the dull and worthy *Money Box* between lighter-weight shows like *Loose Ends* and the 12.30 comedy games shows like *News Quiz*.

In honour of Dame Edith...

The traffic in the central London street came to a halt, a small crowd of startled onlookers gathered and the press cameras flashed for all they were worth. A mellifluous voice rang out enunciating every syllable with loving precision, writes David Lister.

Sir John Gielgud at the age of 93 yesterday gave what could be his last public performance, when he unveiled an English Heritage blue plaque in honour of Dame Edith Evans at her childhood home in Ebury Street, now a doctor's surgery. Sir John was watched by another English acting legend, Sir John Mills, 89, as he played to the assembled gallery.



Stage presence: Sir John Mills watches as Sir John Gielgud unveils the plaque at Dame Edith Evans's former home. Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

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## politics

# Ulster talks face a long hot summer

David McKittrick  
Ireland Correspondent

The scene was set yesterday for a summer of political arm-twisting in Northern Ireland as the three main Unionist parties rejected joint London-Dublin proposals on decommissioning as a basis for wide-ranging talks involving Sinn Fein.

Although there was widespread support among other parties for the proposals, the united Unionist front plunged the multi-party talks into uncertainty over their precise format.

The situation was summed up by David Adams of the Ulster Democratic party, which has loyalist paramilitary associations and which abstained from the vote. He said: "There is talk of another process. All those like ourselves who are committed to entering substantive negotiations in September will just have to put our heads down and try and come up with some other way forward."

Yesterday's development brings a potentially precarious imbalance to the peace process, with Sinn Fein set to be admitted to the September talks but Unionists hanging back. In the coming weeks some spirited debate can be expected within the Protestant community on whether its principal political representatives are right to hold back from talks. Some important clerical figures have advocated going into the talks but the balance of opinion within the general Unionist community remains undimmed.

Tony Blair reiterated this morning while the Secretary for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, insisted on "all necessary steps" to ensure negotiations began on schedule.

It is now taken as a given that the two smaller Unionist parties, led by the Rev Ian Paisley and Robert McCartney, will never sit down with Sinn Fein. Most effort will therefore go into attempting to bring about a softening in the attitude of David Trimble's Ulster Unionists, which, as Northern Ireland's

largest party, holds a pivotal political position.

There is speculation that the talks structure may be recast in a looser formula which might allow a combination of multi-party get-togethers and "proximity talks", with some participants maintaining a distance from the actual conference chamber.

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Ian Paisley: Never likely to negotiate with Sinn Fein

But the Unionist stance had been expected, and ministers said both before and after yesterday's formal vote that the Government's determination to proceed to substantive negotiations on 15 September remained undimmed.

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Lordly gesture: Former England test cricketer Baron Cowdrey of Tonbridge (left), taking his seat in the Lords for the first time yesterday, accompanied by one of his sponsors, Lord Kingsdown

Photograph: Universal Pictorial Press

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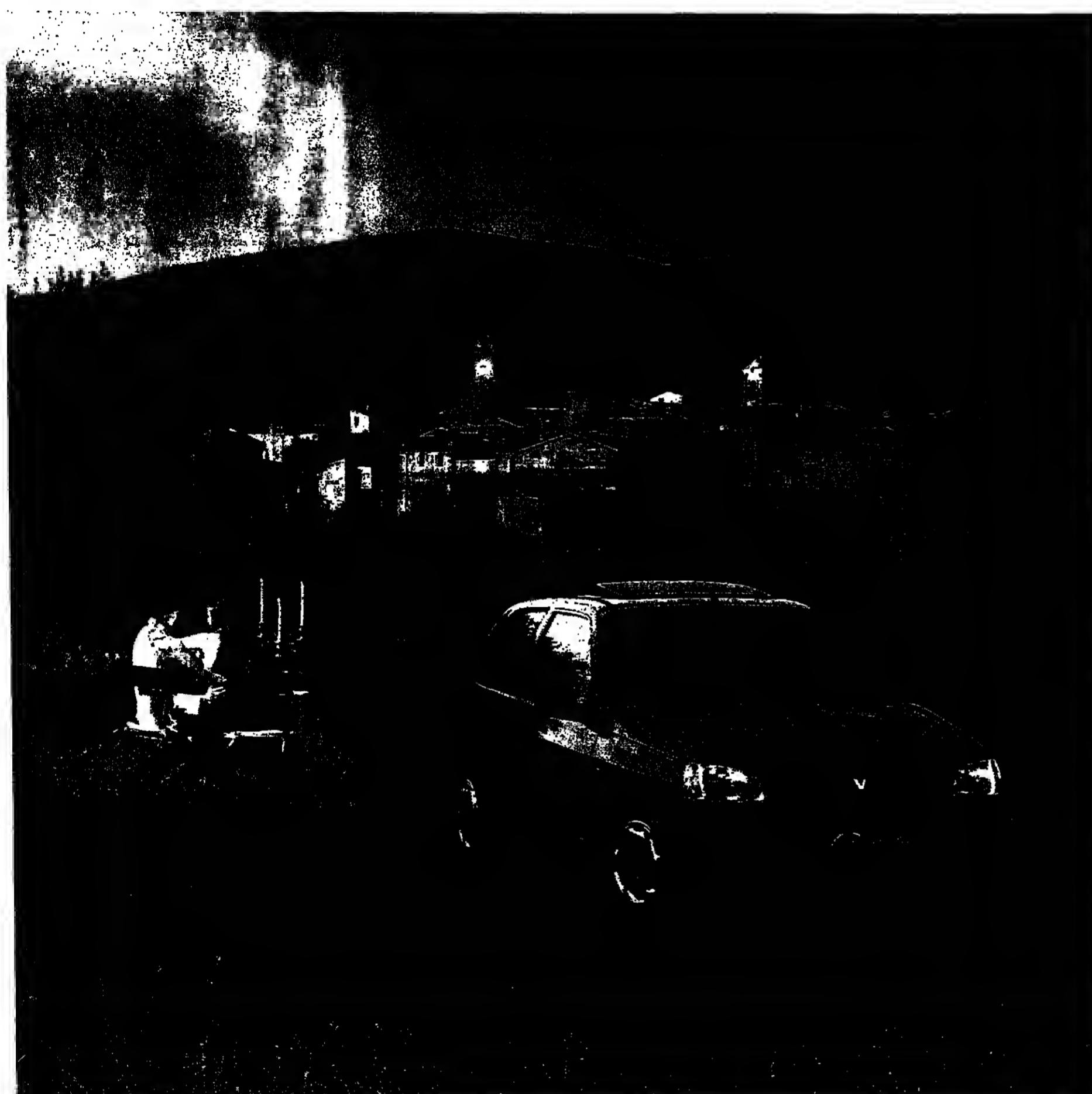
## news

At the Opera House, the best seats go first...



Final 'final' curtain: Seats from the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, which is undergoing a huge redevelopment, being delivered yesterday to the London Architectural Salvage and Supply Co on the edge of the City for sale to the public

Photograph: Brian Harris



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# Judges urge law change for gay rights

Michael Streeter

The Government promised to consider a change in housing law yesterday after the Court of Appeal reluctantly rejected a gay man's attempt to take on his dead partner's flat.

In a split 2-1 judgement, the court ruled that current laws did not protect the right of Martin Fitzpatrick to acquire the tenancy of his partner, John Thompson, but the judges called for a change in legislation.

Lord Justice Ward, rejecting Mr Fitzpatrick's appeal, was scathing about the state of the law, which only Parliament could change. "The law of suc-

cession to Rent Act-protected tenancies is, in short, arbitrary and discriminatory. No one to-day would attempt to defend the favour it accords, outside the marriage tie, to heterosexual relationships over same-sex households."

Mr Fitzpatrick

said he had won a "vital moral victory" and was determined to appeal to the House of Lords.

"As the law stood I knew I couldn't win the case, but when three judges say the law has to be changed ... it is a great thing in my favour. That one of the judges voted for me made me feel that there is a very good chance in the future for me to win this case. I do not intend to give up until I win."

Mr Fitzpatrick, 47, who spent 20 years living with South African-born Thompson in the west London flat, had claimed that he was entitled to take on his partner's protected tenancy because they had effectively lived "as man and wife" for the purposes of the 1977 Rent Act.

He also said the closeness of their relationship entitled him the tenancy as a "member of the family". The court heard how for nine years Fitzpatrick, a

Dublin-born former Royal Navy serviceman, had given round-the-clock care to Thompson after the latter suffered brain damage in a fall down stairs.

When Thompson, a former silversmith and the designated protected tenant of their flat, died in November 1993, the landlords, Sterling Housing Association, who, despite their name, are a private company, told Mr Fitzpatrick to leave.

In his ruling, Lord Justice Ward, who would have allowed Mr Fitzpatrick's appeal, stated: "In my judgment our society has shown itself to be tolerant enough to free itself from the burdens of stereotype and prejudice in all their subtle and ugly manifestations."

A spokeswoman for the Department of Environment said: "We will consider the terms of the judgement and will look at whether we should change the legislation." The department said it already encouraged local authorities and other social-housing providers to offer tenancies to people in similar circumstances.

However, there is no legal obligation on them or anyone in the private sector to do so.

Last year a Labour amendment giving gay couples the same rights as married couples was narrowly defeated after last-minute government concessions to Tory backbenchers.

## 'Lucky' BT pair fight dismissal

Kathy Marks

Two British Telecom employees who were sacked after buying 30 million other callers to win £10 tickets on Concorde in a British Airways offer are to take BT to an industrial tribunal.

Neville Secular and Dean Perry, who worked in the same London office, lodged a claim this week against BT alleging unfair dismissal. They were sacked in March after the company carried out an internal inquiry following a public outcry.

The pair worked in the Data Build computer department, the nerve centre of the telephone system.

The chances of them both winning seats on the Valentine's Day flight to New York, allocated by a phone-in com-

petition, were estimated at 25,600 million to one.

At the time, BT said there was no evidence of fraud. But yesterday the company said the two men had "abused their position to gain advantage".

It refused to comment further, but the clear implication is that they used insider knowledge to circumvent the filter system designed to let only a specified number of calls reach the office that allocated tickets.

The BA offer for the £90 a return ticket was massively over-subscribed. Twenty million calls were logged in 25 minutes.

Mr Secular and Mr Perry have insisted that their success was pure coincidence, saying they decided separately to try their luck on the 0345 number before going into the office.

### DAILY POEM

#### Evacuation: 1940

By Anthony Thwaite

Liverpool docks. The big ship looms above  
Dark sheds and quays, its haughty funnels bright  
With paint and sunlight, as slim sailors shone  
About with chains and hawsers. Mummy's hand  
Is sticky in my own, but it's all right,  
Beginning an adventure. So I stand  
On a deck piled high with prams, the staterooms shrill  
With mothers' mutterings and clasped babies' cries.  
I squirm and tug, ten years impatient, till  
Loud hootings signal something ... The surprise  
Of hugging her, feeling her face all wet:  
"Mummy, you're sweating. They were tears; not mine."  
She went away. I was alone, and fine.

Please, and guilt. Things you do not forget.

"Evacuation: 1940" is one of several poems prompted by childhood memories in Anthony Thwaite's most recent collection, *The Dust of the World* (1994). It now appears in *Selected Poems 1956-1996*, published (price £8.95) by Enitharmon Press at 36 St George's Avenue, London N7 0HD.

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## the Dearing report

# ‘The costs of higher education should be shared among those who benefit’

**Lucy Ward**  
 Education Correspondent

The main points of Sir Ron Dearing's report are:

#### Funding Universities' difficulties

Universities face serious funding problems, which will lead to a fall in the quality of both teaching and research in higher education (HE) if solutions are not found quickly.

Over the past 20 years, the number of students in HE has more than doubled to 1.6 million, and public funding for the sector has gone up in real terms by 45 per cent. But, at the same time, funding per student has fallen by 40 per cent, and investment in infrastructure has been slashed, with more funding cuts planned between now and 2000.

To fend off the worst of immediate cuts and to avoid damaging quality, universities will need an extra £915m by the millennium.

Over the next 20 years, they will need even more cash to allow for an expansion in student numbers, more support for part-time students, improved infrastructure, more research and higher salaries.

**Who should pay?**  
 The costs of higher education should be shared among those who benefit.

## NUS and academia at odds over findings

Vice-chancellors and students were yesterday polarised over plans to introduce tuition fees for higher education, writes Lucy Ward.

While university leaders welcomed the move as a realistic response to a crisis in university funding, the National Union of Students warned that fees would damage access to higher education for poorer would-be undergraduates.

The NUS president, Douglas Trainer, said: "We are totally opposed to any suggestion that students should pick up the bill for tuition. Once the principle of free tuition is breached, the door is open for universities to charge whatever they want for different courses and different colleges."

However, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals welcomed the "bold decision" by David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, to accept that full-time undergraduates must pay after graduation towards the cost of teaching.

The CVCP chief executive, Diana Warwick, said: "This is a necessary step to maintain the quality of their teaching and learning experience and provide a basis for future expansion."

However, the committee called on the Government to slash 6.5 per cent cuts in higher education funding planned over the next two years to no more than 2 per cent.

The Association of Colleges, which represents the further education sector, warmly welcomed proposals to expand higher education partly by increasing the number of students taking diplomas and certificates.

But it suggested the committee had failed to "grasp the nettle" and impose even higher tuition fees on graduates in order to release more funds into the impoverished further education sector.

Industry leaders also gave as qualified welcome to the report. The Confederation of British Industry supported proposals to expand student numbers and underpin quality of qualifications, but questioned the government's decision to abolish student grants.

Higher education unions praised the report, but said urgent steps were needed to remedy the funding crisis.

The Association of University Teachers said all income from fees must be ring-fenced for spending on higher education. The government must ensure universities did not introduce their own top-up fees, the union

Graduates in work should make a greater contribution, since their degree will earn them an 11-14 per cent return, and employers should pay more towards staff training and education, and towards "sandwich years" in industry for undergraduates.

Public funding of HE should be reformed so that a smaller proportion is channelled through funding bodies and more money follows the student. Public spending should increase as the nation's wealth grows.

**How might fees work?**  
 Contributions from graduates could come from one of a number of options involving payment for tuition, living costs, or a combination of the two. The committee's preferred option would see graduates make a flat-rate contribution of 25 per cent of average tuition costs for each year of their course via a subsidised income-contingent loan.

The present system of funding maintenance, in which means-tested grants are available for half the costs while loans finance the other half, would stay, but for the first time the loans would be means-tested.

The committee concludes that none of its four options provides all the extra money needed in the long term, but points out that more money could be raised in the short term by toughening even further the means test for



Setting the rules: Sir Ron Dearing

Photograph: Lathika Kalpathi

maintenance grants and loans – potentially denying even loans for tuition to the wealthiest families. The Government would have to decide if such a move was acceptable, it says.

**How could students be protected?**  
 No increase in graduates' contribution to tuition should be allowed without an independent review and the agreement of both Houses of Parliament. All money from fees repayments should be channelled back into HE. Univer-

sities should be allowed to waive fees for students on benefit, and the social security system should be reviewed to ensure there are no financial disincentives to part-time study.

Student support should be administered by a single Student Support Agency.

**Expansion**  
 Demand for HE from people of all ages will continue to grow. The UK should lift the cap on student num-

bers imposed in 1993 and aim to match the participation rates of other advanced nations, including the United States and Japan.

England and Wales should aim to see the number of school-leavers moving into higher education increasing from one third to at least 45 per cent – the figure already achieved in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Much of the expansion should be at sub-degree level, such as study for the Higher National Certificate (HNC).

Because people from poorer backgrounds, ethnic minorities and the disabled are under-represented in HE, expansion funds should be targeted at institutions which can prove a commitment to widening participation.

**Qualifications**  
 Expansion should not be at the expense of quality. Paying students will demand the highest standards. A package of measures to safeguard degree standards, overseen by a powerful Quality Assurance Agency, should include:

■ An improved external examiner system, in which universities would have to draw on a national pool of recognised academic staff.

■ Minimum "threshold" standards defined for all qualifications by 2000 to ensure guaranteed quality;

■ A fair and robust complaints system;

■ Tighter controls on franchising of

courses by universities to other institutions.

A consistent framework of qualifications should be agreed throughout the UK, involving recognised standards at each level.

There must be a change of values in higher education to afford more respect to teaching as well as to research. All new tutors in higher education would undergo compulsory training, overseen by a professional Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

#### Research

There has been no real-terms increase in government funding for research over the past decade, and UK spending on research compares poorly with competitor countries.

Research is vital to the economy and spending on it should be increased. The Government should set up a loan fund of at least £400m, funded by public and private research sponsors, to support infrastructure in top-quality research departments in real need.

#### Information technology

By 2000-2001, higher education institutions should ensure all students have open access to a networked desktop computer, and by 2005-2006 all students will be required to have access to their own portable computer.

## Students put their case against the fees



End of first year: Zoë Keeler has a First in her economics prelims at Trinity College Cambridge – the richest of the Oxbridge colleges. Aged 20, she has no overdraft, but last Easter she took out the maximum £1,600 loan.

Zoë does not qualify for any grant money at the moment, because her parents are "middle-income I suppose. The means testing of tuition payments is silly. It will affect people like me the most ... It'll mean nothing to the high earners ... It's quite stupid; I've got a younger brother who'll be going through university after me, and my parents will have to pay for him too. You could be quite well off, but have four children," and means-testing would take no account of this. She says if she earns a reasonable salary, she will pay more tax and thus be "refunding the taxpayers' money".

She has managed financially because her parents have given her "around £50 a week for food and living", and she had £800 in the building society left over from her year off. She has also worked in local pubs in the evenings and at Wimbledon during the tennis championships.

On Dearing's "quality assurance", she feels she can already dictate what level of "product" she gets. "Every week [at Trinity] I meet a supervisor on my own. Elsewhere you might have nine or ten other people in your supervision."

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End of Second year: Kat Myers says: "Tuition fees shouldn't be paid for by students. The system they're suggesting is fair, but it's a step over the line in principle." Kat, 21, from Blackpool, has completed the first two years of a Politics and Social Policy degree at Loughborough University and is now at the end of a year's sabbatical.

Her parents' income suggests she would "be somewhere on the sliding scale", but would definitely have to pay something towards tuition. She gets some grant money, and her parents make this up to about £3,000 a year; so far, she has taken out loans each year – £800 in the first year, but the full £1,650 in the second. She likes the flexibility of the current loans system. "In my first year, I had some savings from summer work, but in the second year, I accumulated an overdraft."

Kat has always worked in the summer vacation, earning around £140 a week. While unhappy with the idea of paying for tuition fees, Kat is none the less enthusiastic about the other suggestions Dearing makes. "At the moment, there's a big problem about the level of information given to students by the college. They're not told about what to expect and what rights they have." Like Dearing, she hopes in future students will have more influence in such areas.



Graduated a year ago: Chris Fabby still has an overdraft of £1,800. His History and Politics course at Huddersfield University went well, and, capitalising on his interest in the voluntary pressure group side of politics, he's spent much of the past year as President of the Huddersfield Union, earning about £9,000 a year. This means he also has the Student Loans Company on his back. "They started jumping on me as soon as I got the job. I managed to get a deferral in the end, but they wanted all sorts of documentation and wanted me to prove how much I was earning. Trying to convince them was unbelievable," he said.

"You take out three years when you could be earning, and you expect a low standard of living, but the stereotypes of students are all wrong now. Your average student is now someone with two or three jobs, and on the breadline." Chris, 22, was on a full grant and took out the full loan each year. He thinks it was worth the sacrifices even though they are continuing. However, he says that many of Dearing's suggestions will make it much harder for the next generation. He opposes paying for tuition, which he says is the state's responsibility "if they want a well-educated society".

Interviews by Tom Hampson

## Pack a laptop and watch the bank balance

**Lucy Ward**

It's goodbye to the devil-may-care, beer-drinking student, turning out hand-written essays on obscure Anglo-Saxon poems and saving career plans for after graduation.

Undergraduates of the 21st century will be instantly recognis-

isable by their laptop computers, sheaves of financial advice brochures, work experience checklists and – quite possibly – worried expressions.

An eye on the bank balance will be important: graduates would expect to leave university owing a minimum of £3,000 – £3,000 towards fees for after graduation.

Three years' study and £5,000 in living-cost loans.

Parents, particularly those on higher incomes, are likely to start saving for their children's higher education as early as possible.

To keep costs down, more students may opt to live at home with their parents and

attend nearby universities.

Increasing numbers of students will choose to study for a sub-degree qualification – a higher-level certificate or diploma in a job-related area such as business, computing, art and design, or leisure.

They may then continue in higher education, or opt to get

a job for a few years to gain experience and to save towards studying again later.

High-flying graduates will seek out top firms prepared to pay off their loans as part of a recruitment package.

Students will demand far more information about the skills and knowledge their

degree will give them. Universities will also have to pay more attention to preparing students for work, and more undergraduates will spend a sandwich year in industry.

By 2005, all students will be carrying laptops and making daily use of computers at their universities.

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JOULE BLESZYN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, CHARTS4TELEVISION

## international

Andrew Gumbel  
Belgrade

The last time football teams from Zagreb and Belgrade played each other, back in 1990, the fixture led to rampant violence in the stands and all but unleashed the bitter wars of secession in the former Yugoslavia. Last night, for the first time since the end of the fighting, the old Dynamo team from Zagreb (now renamed "Croatia") ventured into the lion's den to play the away leg of a European Cup qualifier against Partizan Belgrade.

In one way, the match was the latest tentative sign of progress in Serb-Croat relations. In another, though, it was simply an illustration of how bizarre politics have become in the Balkans after four years of fighting.

The Croatian team did not so much burst into Belgrade as crawl in, keeping themselves very much to themselves very much to themselves. In central Belgrade, fans sporting black and white Partizan shirts spent all afternoon parading,

shouting slogans and honking car horns.

Violent clashes between supporters did not materialise – for the simple reason that no Croatian supporters were foolhardy to come along for the ride. So was this a sports event, or a real exercise in Balkan politics?

"Obviously, there's no way this can be a simple football match after all the crises and the war of the past few years," commented one Partizan supporter, 22-year-old Emir Kurtovic.

In many ways, Mr Kurtovic embodied the craziness of the whole affair. He was not a Belgrader at all, but had travelled up from Novi Pazar – emphasising the extent to which this match was less a contest between Belgrade and Zagreb as between Serbia and Croatia. But on the other hand he was also a Muslim. The postwar Balkans have become a very confused place.

The confusion was even more evident in the line-up of the teams. Croatia Zagreb's star player, the 31-year-old

winger Robert Prosinecki, used to play for Red Star Belgrade and was part of the team that won the European Cup in 1991.

On the Belgrade side, goal-

keeper Ivica Kralj has featured prominently in the Zagreb

newspapers over the past few

days because he is said to be an ethnic Croat. Such paradoxes make a mockery of the sort of

nationalist sentiments that

fuelled the 1990 game between

Dynamo and Red Star at Zagreb's Maximir stadium.

Then, the Belgrade supporters broke down the crowd-control barriers, provoking battles that quickly spilled into the streets outside. The police were powerless to prevent a night to demand democratic rights from

Mr Milosevic, used the above as a symbol of the number of Serbs who have walked out of the country during his rule.



Two tribes: Top left, Dynamo star Zvonimir Bisić kicking a policeman during rioting at the 1990 Red Star match. Above, Croatian fans usually travel abroad in large numbers, but this time they stayed home. Photographs: Alsport (above), Popperfoto

## Croats and Serbs settle old scores – but this time on a football ground

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## 14 international

## Famine feeds anti-British mood



New Englanders are the latest to follow Hollywood in fuelling anger over Irish history

David Usborne  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

There was new tumult on Cambridge Common in front of the gates to Harvard University yesterday. On the spot where over two centuries ago George Washington took control of the troops that chased Britain from colonial America, thousands gathered to mark another moment in history that is not kind to the English.

With the keening of bagpipes, throngs of Irish Americans, a few in nationalist green-and-orange T-shirts, watched as the Irish President, Mary Robinson, unveiled the first memorial in the United States to Ireland's "Great Hunger" in the 1840s. Some shedding tears, all who attended later joined a solemn procession to lay yellow roses and white carnations at its base.

The bronze—a man holding a dead child bidding farewell to a teenage son who is carrying a living infant and preparing to board a "coffin ship" bound for America—glints nobly in the memory of the 1 million who died in the potato famine that was at its harshest in 1847, and the 2 million more who fled from their country, with many of them ending up on Massachusetts shores.

Until now, only memorials to



Irish roots: Final touches to Harvard's bronze statue in remembrance of the Great Hunger of the 1840s (left). Top left, Brad Pitt fights for the IRA in *The Devil's Own*

soldiers who fought the British in the Revolution had been permitted on the Common. The sub-text is clear: in many minds here the figures are also a testament to British colonial guilt. "We remember," declared the principle organiser of the memorial, John O'Connor, "the children with green teeth from eating grass, and we remember the decisions in London of a government that could have fed the Irish but decided it made good economic sense to drive them from their land."

Thus yesterday's fervour on the common also represented

a growing and politically-correct cult in the United States of romanticising the Irish story. At its roots are both the nostalgia that naturally imbues any ethnic minority in a foreign land and also the appetite for votes among politicians in a country of 40 million people who describe themselves as Irish-Americans. Include in this Mr O'Connor, a Boston businessman who aspires to a seat in Congress to represent a city where one in four people claim Irish descent. And include also, President Bill Clinton.

Hollywood too has recog-

nised this emotionally charged market. To cries of foul from many in Britain who see historical inaccuracies in them, films about Ireland have been tumbling from the studios. *In the Name of the Father*, portraying the miscarriage of justice in the conviction of the Guildford Four, was followed by *Michael Collins*, the freedom fighter who was the principle architect of the Irish Free State. This year we have already seen *The Devil's Own* and *Some Mother's Son*.

While the granting of a visa to Gerry Adams in 1995 by President Clinton provoked the first

sador in Washington, Sir John Kerr, when he declared that the failure of Ireland's potato crop was "the result of a deliberate campaign by the British to deny the Irish people the food they needed to survive".

In Boston last night, television

news viewers watched a detailed report on how the Whig government in London chose to export crops from the Irish colony at the same time as its staple potato crop failed.

True, in April, Tony Blair offered a short statement of regret—not quite an apology—over the circumstances of the

famine. "Those who governed in London at the time failed their people through standing by while a crop failure turned into a massive human tragedy." But this may have only served to intensify the debate.

On Cambridge Common, President Robinson steers clear of the arguments over Britain's role in the famine. In the crowd, views are more bluntly expressed. "It was genocide, and it was deliberate," insists Ed Child, an Irish-American and a cook at Harvard. As for the argument that Britain is being treated unfairly, either in poli-

tics or on celluloid, Mr Childs simply laughs. "It's like saying that man who ate humans, Jeffrey Dahmer, was unfairly treated at his trial."

Trying to "educate" Americans is a full time job for the British embassies in the US. "I think there is a growing appreciation that this thing is more complicated than it has been commonly portrayed in this country, that is more than just a British and Irish problem," said one British diplomat.

Had he been here in Cambridge yesterday he may have felt less optimistic.

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**Legal & General**

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

Computers already run your engine, so why not let them drive the car too? That vision came slightly closer to reality in the United States on Tuesday as a 7.6-mile (12.2-km) stretch of the Interstate 15 road near San Diego, California, was used to show off the "automated highway" of the future.

Its creators, scientists from the University of Berkeley and members of the National Automated Highway System Consortium, were proud to call it "really dull". Once the computer takes over, the driver does not have to operate the pedals or even steer.

"It's really exciting for about the first 15 seconds, then it gets really dull," said Jim Rillings of the NAHSC.

"It's like driving with a chauffeur. You just sit back and let your mind wander."

The test was purely a demonstration; the specially-equipped

cars, which have radar and desktop PCs on board, are not available to the public.

But the NAHSC intends to have its system, on which it has spent \$20m, up and running by 2002.

The automated highway is a reaction to increasing gridlock on America's car-filled, bus-crammed and train-battered transport system.

The traffic begins building up at 5am outside Washington DC, while some commuters near California's main work centres

have to leave home at 4am to get to work on time. The system works by detecting magnets buried about 1.2 metres apart on either side of the road, providing the directional information allowing the car to follow the road. A built-in radar also takes note of the distance to the car in front.

The dozen cars and buses in the demonstration project are equipped with tiny video cameras facing forward that also follow visual aids along the road. These could be cement barriers

or even deep tracks in a snowy road.

Supporters of the project insist it will save millions of federal dollars, as it relies on the existing infrastructure and would eliminate the need to build more freeway lanes. Vehicles could travel faster and closer, reducing fuel use (through slipstreaming) and, the inventors hope, accidents.

It would cost less than \$10,000 to equip one mile of freeway with the new technology, compared with anywhere from \$1m to \$100m to build each mile of new highway, said Dick Bishop, a transportation department spokesman.

However, it looks like the automated highway will not move without roadworks. As ever, the delays will get worse before they get better. Jim Saxon, president of the National Motorists' Association, has dubbed the new system "undriving", and warned: "We may be living in the golden age of commuting, and not even know it."



Photograph: Wendy Maeda/Boston Globe

## Italy pleads for death row inmate who captured the nation's soul

John Carlson  
Washington

Joseph O'Dell is just another death row inmate in his native America, the 44th to be killed this year if his scheduled execution goes ahead in the small hours of this morning. But in Italy the convicted murderer is a national martyr, a patron saint of unjust causes.

Yesterday, reports of his impending death led Italian news bulletins, but neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* dedicated one word to the story. Outside, the correctional centre in Greensville, Virginia, there were more Italian journalists than American ones.

The Pope has appealed for clemency, as has Luigi Scalfaro, the Italian president and Romano Prodi, the prime minister.

The Italian parliament has passed a resolution demanding a stay of execution and on Monday, the mayor of Palermo led a delegation to the office of the governor of Virginia, George Allen, to plead for O'Dell's life on behalf of the people of his town, the whole of Italy and, he said, the European parliament.

O'Dell has been made an honorary citizen of Palermo and has expressed a wish to be buried there should the execution go ahead. The *Virginian-Pilot* newspaper reported on Tuesday that the Italian authorities were making contingency plans to fly his body to the Sicilian capital aboard an Italian air force plane.

But O'Dell, as his name would suggest, has no family connections with Palermo, Sicily or anywhere else in Italy. He

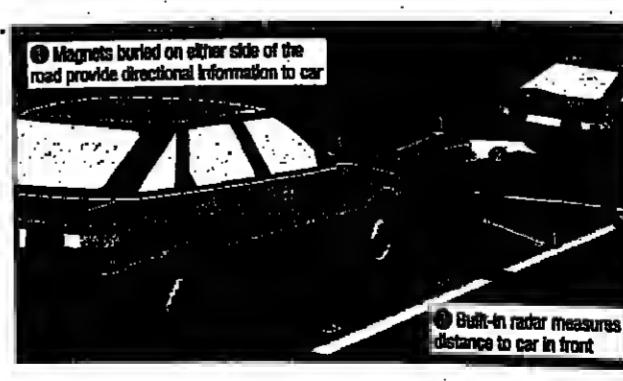
does not speak Italian and has never set foot on Italian soil. Why O'Dell? He insists that he is innocent and there are reasons to doubt his guilt. A prison informer who testified that O'Dell had confessed to the murder recanted his testimony last year. His lawyers argue that he should be submitted to DNA testing not available in 1985 when he was convicted of beating, raping, sodomising and strangling a 44-year-old woman.

Doubts like these emerge time and again on the eve of executions. In American terms, there is nothing unique in O'Dell's predicament nor the nature of the barbarity which, in Italian eyes, the authorities are planning to perpetrate.

So why the melodrama in Italy? Correspondents in the US for *Ansa*, the Italian news agency, and *La Repubblica* said yesterday that the story had merely been picked up by one newspaper, whereupon radio and TV had joined in, the snowball effect accelerated by the interventions of the Pope and president.

The decisive moment in swinging the public mood came 11 days ago, when *La Repubblica* published an open letter he wrote to the people of Italy. "If this act of injustice will be carried out," the letter said, "I will be sustained by my last breath by the thought that the people of your great nation will be with me, praying for me in my deathbed." However, O'Dell did not write the letter. The brainchild of a reporter from *La Repubblica*, O'Dell and his lawyers gave it their unmitigated approval.

## Automated highway puts computer in driving seat



① Magnets buried on either side of the road provide directional information to car

② Built-in radar measures distance to car in front



Life's a breeze: Children watch as winds blow up clothes put out to dry by laundrymen on the banks of the River Buriganga in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Photograph: Reuters

## Yeltsin wins over the West

Phil Reeves  
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin found himself with some strange bedfellows yesterday. The Pope, Human rights activists, The United States Senate. These are not entities whom he has always considered friends. But his refusal to sign a Bill which would have sharply curbed religious freedom in Russia has won him rare international applause and will be seen as a milestone, albeit small, in his erratic presidency.

Observers of this complex man have long puzzled over which component of his character is dominant – despot, pragmatist or (loosely speaking) democrat. Is he the autocrat who bombarded parliament in 1993, and blindly led his nation into a bloodbath in Chechnya? Or is he the man whom the world remembers standing on a tank opposing the failed coup of 1991 – the same man who, for all his errors, presides over a country where the citizenry can read what they like, travel abroad, and (despite a manipulated press) say what they like.

### President risks wrath of Orthodox Church in refusal to sign bill restricting religious freedom

The third, and more convincing, variant is that of a man who simply does what it takes to retain power. It was this entity who fathered both the nationalist Boris Yeltsin of 1993, surrounded by his hard-line military cronies and dependent on the security services, and Boris the Beneficent who won the 1996 elections after promising to spend, spend, spend on the people – a pledge he knew he would break.

But the freedom of worship issue placed Mr Yeltsin in a genuine quandary. It was a "difficult decision", he said, after labouring over the papers from his holiday residence in Central Russia. And he was right. The Bill would have restricted the activities of all four religions which are classified as "traditional" in Russia – Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. All other faiths would have to prove that they have been active in Russia for more than 15

years before they received legal rights.

The ostensible targets of the new laws were outlandish religious sects. But it was also an attempt by the Orthodox Church to see off established rival churches from abroad, such as the Catholics, who claim 1 million worshippers in Russia.

As such, it blatantly violated the Russian constitution which says that all religions are equal. The Bill forced Mr Yeltsin to make a choice in which he took a hit either way. Signing it would have dealt a blow to his relations with the United States and the West at a time when Russia is still seeking further loans, investment and integration into international structures. The US Senate was poised to withhold \$200m in aid had he signed.

Even without that threat, no politician in his right mind would seek to unleash the baying hounds of the American religious lobby. But, by vetoing it,

he has set himself at odds with the Orthodox Church, an institution which stands close to the state and which is being promoted as a focus for the new Russia's national aspirations by evoking its imperial past.

Mr Yeltsin is not especially devout, but he has forged close political ties to the Church.

During his election campaign, he rarely missed an opportunity to appear on television standing next to the Russian Patriarch, Alexy II.

Yesterday the Church maintained a stony silence about the President's decision. But the hierarchy will be displeased. Mr Yeltsin's decision has also intensified his running battle with his Communist-dominated Parliament, with whom he has been fighting on several fronts, notably over removing Lenin from his mausoleum on Red Square.

On the face of it, a stand-off is now looming between the Kremlin and the legislature

when the latter returns to work in the autumn. Both houses overwhelmingly supported the Bill; they could override his veto with a two-thirds vote, forcing it into the courts.

Yesterday there were bullish cries from the Communist camp. Victor Ilyukhin, a leading voice in the party, accused Mr Yeltsin of running a pro-Western government.

Another, Valentin Kuptsov, accused him of caving in to "voices from across the ocean".

However, none of this will worry Mr Yeltsin much. He relishes the opportunity to remind Parliament of its institutional weakness and his strength. And the Communist-nationalist opposition has proved so ineffectual that a debate has begun among Russia watchers over whether it amounts to an opposition at all.

President Sali Berisha of Albania marked the opening of the new parliament yesterday by announcing his "irrevocable" resignation as head of state in the wake of the stinging defeat suffered by his Democratic Party in last month's general elections.

The announcement, made in a radio broadcast and yet to be fully formalised, was one more tortuously taken step along the path to the relinquishing of the authoritarian power Mr Berisha has wielded over the past five years.

Ever since the elections, which went relatively smoothly despite the prevailing mood of anarchy in the country, Mr Berisha has paid lip-service to normal democratic behaviour

while still attempting to stir up trouble behind the scenes. First he lent his tacit support to Leka Zogu, hero of the royalist party whose attempt to become king was rejected in a popular referendum.

Then he complained that the elections had been conducted in an atmosphere of intimidation towards Democratic Party supporters and vowed that his party would boycott parliament until further notice.

Party members serving on the central electoral commission held up the final results by two weeks by refusing to put their signatures to them. At yesterday's opening session of parliament, the Democratic Party seats remained empty.

Yesterday's statement was the clearest indication yet that

he is on his way out, but Mr Berisha has more axes up his sleeve. He put himself on his party's electoral list and will, once the boycott is over, enter parliament as leader of the opposition. He also has plenty of ardent supporters – many of them young, ill-educated and heavily armed, with the potential to stir up trouble.

This prospect still frightens many Albanians, although his room for manoeuvre is likely to be severely limited once he finally leaves office. The new government is expected to be led by the head of the victorious Socialist Party, Fatos Nano, while the new president is likely to be Rexhep Mejdani, who ran the Socialist Party while Mr Nano was in jail on trumped-up charges of corruption.

## British snub Burma as junta joins Asia's club

Richard Lloyd Parry  
Kuala Lumpur

In a move that was immediately welcomed by human rights groups, a senior British official yesterday boycotted a ceremony honouring the admission of the Burmese military junta into the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean).

The ceremony, at a hotel in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, marked the culmination of a controversy which began a year ago, when the seven members of Asean formally

announced plans to admit Burma, along with Laos and Cambodia. The proposal caused immediate concern in the European Union and the United States, who refuse to recognise the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc), Burma's junta, which exerts ruthless power in the country despite being defeated in elections seven years ago by Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy.

By the end of last year, it had become clear that Asean's mind was made up, and when the then



Gagged: Anti-Burma protesters yesterday

Photograph: AP

Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, attended a meeting of European and Asian delegations in Singapore in February, he made little more than ritualistic references to the problem.

Yesterday, however, acting on instructions from the Foreign Office in London, the British High Commissioner to Malaysia, David Moss, failed to attend the ceremony, sending in his place a diplomat of lower rank. "Bearing in mind the state of UK-Burma relations, it was deemed inappropriate," said a spokesman for the High Commission. The other two members of the EU troika, Luxembourg and Holland, as well as the United States, all sent their ambassadors to the ceremony, to the disgust of pro-democracy organisations who protested outside the hotel, wearing gags bearing the Asean slogans "Peace", "Freedom", "Neutrality" and "Prosperity".

"It's good that the UK has done this because for all these countries there is a serious question of credibility," said Fan Yew Teng, of the Burma Solidarity Group Malaysia. "It's one thing to impose sanctions on Slorc, but if you then turn up to their welcoming ceremony, what kind of message does that send?"

Until now, Britain's position has been in line with its European partners: an embargo on all arms sales, a ban on aid (apart from grass-roots support for humanitarian projects), but no formal trade embargo like that imposed by the US.

Diplomats in Brussels attempted to agree on a common European solution to the problem of attendance at the ceremony but in the end the British went their own way, in keeping with Labour's commitment to the

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## significant shorts

### Race against time for flood-threatened town

German rescue teams raced to evacuate areas along the Oder after a dyke reinforcing its banks burst and others threatened to collapse. Officials said they were clearing areas south of Frankfurt an der Oder and at the confluence of the Oder and Neisse rivers; water levels would rise by 20 cm (8in) during the day and the dykes were so porous that large swathes of the area could be under water by early next week.

Reuters – Frankfurt an der Oder

### Old foes mend fences

Hungary reopened a consulate in Cluj closed nine years ago by the late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. But it was marred by Romanian nationalists phoning death-threats to the Prime Minister, Victor Ciorbea, accusing him of giving too many rights to Romania's 1.7 million ethnic Hungarians. Cluj, once a trilingual city with many native German-speakers, now has a population of 330,000, about a fourth of whom are ethnic Hungarians.

AP – Cluj

### Taylor wins Liberia poll

Liberia's electoral chiefs made final checks before proclaiming the former warlord Charles Taylor winner of presidential polls. Partial results on Tuesday gave him a 75-per-cent lead over 11 rivals, assuring him the job he failed to win by the gun. One of the contenders, the former foreign minister Bacchus Mathews, conceded defeat and endorsed the elections as "reasonably free and fair".

Reuters – Monrovia

### Rebels slaughter 47

Muslim rebels killed 47 people, mostly by cutting their throats, in two attacks south of Algiers, an Algerian newspaper said. Le Matin said that 38 died in one attack and nine in another overnight on Sunday-Monday.

Reuters – Paris

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## obituaries / gazette

## Professor Jeremy Burdett

Jeremy Burdett had the ability to make complicated chemical ideas seem simple. He could go straight to the heart of a scientific problem, ignore confusing detail, and present his solution in a form accessible to everyone.

From 1978 until his untimely death at the age of 49, he was Professor of Chemistry at the University of Chicago. There his interests turned, in addition to the structure of individual molecules, to the structure of solids. His great contribution was to show how rather simple theoretical ideas derived from organic and inorganic chemistry could be applied to the apparently more complicated world of solids.

His approach was to bypass the immense number-crunching calculations then in vogue, yet he managed to provide deep insights into the structure of high-temperature superconductors and the design of materials with specific properties.

Burdett was born in London in 1947, and studied Natural Sciences, specialising in chemistry, at Magdalene College, Cambridge, from where he graduated in 1968. He immediately seized the opportunity to begin research in the United States, as Power Foundation Fellow at the University of Michigan, working with Professor Jerry Current. This experience left him with a deep respect for American chemistry, which had lasting consequences for his scientific career.

He obtained an MSc at Michigan in 1970 and returned to Cambridge to work with Jim Turner.

Already he was full of ideas and was very stubborn about them, even when he was wrong. He was working on Matrix Isolation, a spectroscopic technique which allows very unstable molecular fragments to be studied by trapping them at temperatures close to Absolute Zero (-273°C). Matrix Isolation led to the trapping of molecular fragments containing chromium or iron, with structures which were not predicted by conventional theory. Burdett became intrigued, and began to wonder why.

Following his Cambridge PhD in 1972, he was appointed Senior Research Officer at Newcastle University, where he moved with Jim Turner plus several other members of the Cambridge research group. Newcastle gave Burdett the opportunity to develop his ideas. In a series of elegant papers, he was able to rationalise the unusual molecular structures revealed by the Matrix Isolation experiments. In 1977, he and Martyn Poliakoff were jointly awarded Meldola medals of the Royal Society of Chemistry, Poliakoff for the experiments and Burdett for explaining them.

The year 1977 was a watershed. Burdett spent a sabbatical at Cornell with Roald Hoffmann, who later won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry. He obtained an MSc at Michigan in 1970 and returned to Cambridge to work with Jim Turner.

which have puzzled chemists for a long time. As usual, his answers are refreshing, convincing and readily understandable.

His contributions to the University of Chicago were considerable. From 1987 to 1991, he was Master of the Physical Sciences Collegiate Division and Associate Dean of the Physical Sciences Division of the college. From 1992 till his death, he was Chairman of the Chemistry Department. His commitment to teaching was recognised by the University of Chicago's Anzo Foundation Award for Distinguished Contributions to Undergraduate Teaching in 1993.

Despite his long stay in the US, Jeremy Burdett remained recognisably an Englishman until he became sufficiently Americanised to be refreshingly critical on his many visits to the UK. He was a great colleague, bursting with enthusiasm. He taught with commitment, and influenced us all with his penetrating insight. It was fun to be in the laboratory with him.

James J. Turner  
and Martyn Poliakoff

**Jeremy Keith Burdett, chemist: born London 1 July 1947; Senior Research Officer, Newcastle University 1972-78; Professor of Chemistry, University of Chicago 1978-97; Chairman of Department 1992-97; three times married (two sons); died Michigan 23 June 1997.**



No number-crunching: Burdett remained recognisably an Englishman despite his 19 years in Chicago



Nostalgia for the pit: Berry tried to recreate 'a happier Rhondda'

For those who thought that, after *How Green Was My Valley*, the novel of Welsh proletarian life was exhausted, the work of Ron Berry came as something of a surprise.

Although he did not have the lyrical gifts of Richard Llewellyn, oor the power to create a powerful myth about the loss of Edeo after the discovery of coal in the South Wales valleys, Berry was able to draw a more authentic picture of working-class life because he was born into it and never left it. His six novels are testimony to his deep sympathy with a way of life which, now that only one of the region's pits remains, has virtually come to an end and will soon pass from living memory.

He was born a miner's son in 1920 at Blaen-cwm, which, as its name implies, is at the top end of the Rhondda Fawr, perhaps the most famous of all the coal-bearing valleys of South Wales. Leaving school at the age of 14, he worked as a miner in local

pits until the outbreak of the Second World War, during which he served in both the Army and the Merchant Navy.

He also played soccer for a while, a sport celebrated in his penultimate novel, *So Long, Hector Webb* (1970), which is unusual in that its narrative consists of a series of interior monologues which are as sensitive as they are menacing. Ron Berry began writing after spending a year at Coleg Harlech, "the College of the Second Chance", the residential college for adult students at Harlech in North Wales, where he read avidly and honed his left-wing political views in endless argument with staff and fellow-students. He was to remain profoundly suspicious of academic erudition, particularly of the novel, but was able to hold his own in any discussion of the genre. His gruff manner and sometimes cootie-

views enlivened the correspondence which he kept up with a wide circle of friends and acquaintances.

The Rhondda of Ron Berry's novels is unlike that of any other novelist: it is economically more prosperous (before the closing of the mines), its people more sophisticated and more hedonistic, less concerned with politics and religion than those in the stories of, say, Rhys Davies or Gwyn Thomas. The main characters in his first novel, *Hunters and Hunted* (1960), are feckless and mainly concerned with boozing, women and drawing the dole. In *Travelling Loaded* (1963) he describes the picaresque adventures of men who work in a steelworks during the winter and spend the summer living rough in the countryside.

Ron Berry once told me that he was trying to recreate "a happier Rhondda" than the one conventionally portrayed in the many novels which have taken the valleys as their background

His concern that the old communal values were beginning to wither was first expressed in *The Full-Time Amateur* (1966), in which social change processes sap the affluent working-class bar cars and television, go hingo and take holidays abroad.

He saw himself as their chronicler, lovingly but sometimes caustically recording "what remains of the past" before it spluttered out as garbled memory". This threnody for a doomed way of life found its fullest expression in *Flame and Slog* (1968), a novel based on his journal of a dying miner, whose poignant recollection of the old Rhondda is used as counterpoint to the brash rootlessness and incomprehension of his children.

In Ron Berry's novels the working class, for all their shortcomings, adapt, survive and eventually thrive in their own conditions, so that his work is more a warm-hearted affirmation of his belief in them than

a rigorous critique. When Dewi Joshua, the hero of *This Bygone* (1993), his last novel, is declared redundant, it looks like the end of him and the community of

politicians and, in Wales, it was only on the appearance of his last novel that he attracted much attention. This general indifference to his work took its toll, and, together with the arthritis which plagued him for more than 30 years, was largely responsible for his rather unresponsive attitude to critics and academics. Usually unemployed and often short of money, he spent a good deal of his time in fly-fishing and bird watching. One of his books was about the return of the peregrine falcon to his beloved Rhondda.

His financial difficulties were partially relieved in the 1970s when a number of his friends were instrumental in obtaining a Civil List pension for him.

Malic Stephens

**Ronald Anthony Berry, novelist: born Blaen-cwm, Glamorgan 23 February 1920; married Rene Jones (two sons, three daughters); died Ponysprid, Mid Glamorgan 16 July 1997.**



Cranwell: irresistible

The musical didn't get off the ground, but my admiration for his ability to pitch a deal developed into a friendship I was proud of. His last year was spent in writing a memoir. In the style of Damon Runyon, of his association with the con men of the white collar world and the not so glittering prizes of show business.

Peter Cranwell had over 43 years of psychoanalysis. He never married, one suspects, because he couldn't make the right deal.

Jay Landesman

**Peter Cranwell, theatrical producer: born London 21 July 1925; died Stevenage, Hertfordshire 12 July 1997.**

**1951-55: Comptroller and Auditor-General 1971-76.**  
Professor Kenneth Hale, historian, died 2 July, aged 71. Author of *The First Earl of Shafesbury* (1968), *The Dutch in the 17th Century* (1972) and *Politics in the Reign of Charles II* (1985).

## Ron Berry

Ron Berry spent the war as a student to the attention of his teacher. It was published in his "Tel Quel" series. In a preface Solters praises its liberty of form, its grim humour, its unusual indifference to what are usually considered serious matters: disease, pain, loneliness and death itself. Recently, it was sumptuously re-edited by Iris Tramonti respecting all Ron's typographical eccentricities, and in seven colours, a different colour for each of the seven voices. Yet Ron never belonged to the "Tel Quel" group or the creators of the *nouveau roman*. He remained an exception, almost an outsider, unclassifiable.

*Circus* (1972), *Codex* (1974) and *Opéra bouffe* (1975) are no

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*Circus* (1972), *Codex* (1974) and *Opéra bouffe* (1975) are no

table for their witty subversions of language and literary form, and belong to the tradition of Sterne, Rabelais, Jarry, Queeau and Jules Romains. They are composed of almost random fragments and short sequences, aphorisms, paroxysmal phrases and absurd black ineluctable interventions.

Ron's gay obsession with death and dying made some readers feel distinctly uncomfortable, as did succeeding titles like *Macabre, un trompe de la haute intelligence* (1979), *Testament et Maladie Méloïde* (both 1980), and especially *Je ne suis pas bien mal, il faut que j'y aille* ("I'm Not Feeling Very Well But I'll Just Have To Get On With It"), which in 1987 won

the Grand Prix de l'Humour Noir. The first section of this grotesque gallimaufry is very topical because it introduces a racing cyclist in the Tour de France who specialises in *contre le monde* record-breaking and is nicknamed "Le Chiron" by the sporting press. It starts: "Il était before his time... which was very short, short a streak of oblivion". His last section consists of a few words of his that were collected in a sandglass that ran for three minutes only.

In *Qui n'a pas vu Dieu n'a rien vu* ("He Who Has Not Seen God Has Seen Nothing") - a satiric title from 1980, he writes:

"I was born in those days, but now I'm catching up with my

self." He attacks hospitals and the medical profession with glibness and charm, with a love of absurd word-play that makes him almost untranslatable and despite the lifelong duelling with death, full of sour puckish humour that sometimes makes one wince, then giggle helplessly. Like all true farceurs, he was deadly serious.

In *Maladie Méloïde* he wrote:

"Is the pain going away, or am I just getting used to it?" Not a bad joke for the Day of the Dead.

James Kirkup

**Maurice Roche, writer: born Clermont-Ferrand, France 2 November 1924; died Sèvres, France 19 July 1997.**

## Maurice Roche

It brought to the attention of his teacher. It was published in his "Tel Quel" series. In a preface Solters praises its liberty of form, its grim humour, its unusual indifference to what are usually considered serious matters: disease, pain, loneliness and death itself. Recently, it was sumptuously re-edited by Iris Tramonti respecting all Ron's typographical eccentricities, and in seven colours, a different colour for each of the seven voices. Yet Ron never belonged to the "Tel Quel" group or the creators of the *nouveau roman*. He remained an exception, almost an outsider, unclassifiable.

*Circus* (1972), *Codex* (1974) and *Opéra bouffe* (1975) are no

about. This had happened because going on the walking tour caused him to miss enough rehearsals of the Stratford Choral Society's preparations to disqualify him from taking part in the concert. To avoid that, he arranged to take along a specially prepared instructional tape; this enabled him, with the aid of a

tape player, to rehearse his part whilst walking.

He then sang successfully in the concert on the evening of his return to Stratford.

He was born to five, then began to live - but why live anyhow?

Sir David Pinfold, civil servant, died 9 July, aged 84. Principal Private Secretary to Clement Attlee while Prime Minister in 1951 and Anthony Eden in 1955; and Joint Principal Private Secretary, with Sir John Colville, to Sir Winston Churchill.

**1951-55: Comptroller and Auditor-General 1971-76.**

Professor Kenneth Hale, historian, died 2 July, aged 71. Author of *The First Earl of Shafesbury* (1968), *The Dutch in the 17th Century* (1972) and *Politics in the Reign of Charles II* (1985).

The first appellant was barred, by absolute immunity, from mounting an action for defamation based on material which formed part of a criminal investigation. The Court of Appeal dismissed the plaintiffs' appeal from a decision of Sir Michael Davies, sitting as a judge of the Queen's Bench Division, ordering that the plaintiffs' action for defamation be struck out against the defendants, the Serious Fraud Office, the Solicitors' Complaints Bureau. He explained that the Compensation Fund worked, and its application to the fraud inquiry. A file note was made. Criminal proceedings had by then been begun against two of the men, and the SFO disclosed to their solicitors "unused material" which included the letter to the Attorney General and the file note.

Lord Justice Kennedy said that the judge had found that when the appellant had been shown the documents he had been subject to an implied understanding of the form of parasitic litigation where the statement or conduct relied upon was part of the process of investigating a crime with a view to prosecution.

Documents seized by the police or other prosecuting authority during a criminal investigation must be treated as confidential, their owners being entitled to expect that they would only be used for the specific purpose for which they had been seized.

In civil proceedings a party who obtained discovery was required in return to give an implied undertaking to the court not to use material supplied in the course of discovery or allow it to be used for any purpose other than the proper conduct of the action in which discovery was obtained.

When the prosecution disclosed material to the defence in the course of a criminal prosecution, whether it were used or unused material, the authorities prior to *Mahon v Rahn* (unreported, 23 May 1997) were silent as to whether that

proposition would be determinative of the appeal unless there was anything in the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 or *Mahon v Rahn* which led to a different view. The Act did not have direct application to the present case because the material parts had not come into force until April 1997.

*Mahon v Rahn* was not decisive either, because it did not address the issue of absolute immunity.

In conformity with the decision in *Mahon v Rahn*, however, the judge's finding as to the existence of and breach of an implied undertaking could not now be sustained, but for the reasons given that had no effect on the outcome of the appeal. The appeal was dismissed.

**Rose O'Hanlon, Barrister**

and the court, and that it would be a breach of that undertaking to use them for the purposes of the present action.

Five propositions could be extracted from an examination of the authorities. Whatever the form of action it would be barred if it was founded upon what a witness had said in the witness box, or upon what had been said or done in preparing the evidence for a trial.

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# Dearing: so much paper, so little inspiration

One can only conclude, from reading right through the summary and main report published by Sir Ron Dearing yesterday, that he and his committee buried themselves under toppling heaps of paper and a groaning din of evidence from which they never managed to escape. The report published yesterday is uninspired, pedestrian, and is bound to make some readers wonder whether this kind of vast extended commission is the right way to prepare for developing radical long-term policy. Certainly the outcome in this case is an indigestible set of recommendations of questionable consistency. The report itself claims to set out a "new vision" of a "new compact" (ghastly word, compact), but in reality it does not such thing. In fact, the biggest single disappointment is that it has thrown away a once-in-30-years opportunity to paint a vivid, compelling picture of what higher education in Britain could be like in 2020.

No doubt the authors of the report, and Sir Ron in particular, will be dismayed by this judgement. In some measure they will be justified. After all, it's a big, complex subject. Higher education is a diverse sector of semi-autonomous institutions, and the committee members had only 14 months to consider their very wide remit (most of us think 14 months rather a long time, but let that pass). Moreover, when the key proposals are distilled from the document, most

are unobjectionable – indeed, virtually platitudinous. Of course we should have a "learning society". Of course it should be open to all of talent. Of course higher education needs to be properly funded. Of course we want to avoid nasty pay disputes. But the report reads across far too much of its acreage as it is intent on summarising a "politically correct" received opinion about higher education – as if it is so eager not to offend anyone that it ends up saying all things to all people.

It is a great pity, not least because Sir Ron is one of the most impressive members of the great and good to emerge from the civil service and public enterprise machine since the end of the war. He has a fine mind, capable of distilling central issues. It does not feel as if such distillation skills have been applied successfully here.

No harm is done by publishing huge tomes of material: the cok compendium of information, opinion and options gathered by the committee will no doubt prove a useful resource for higher education policy-makers. But surely a primary objective of a report like this should be to give incisive guidance, to lead opinion, to challenge assumptions, and to portray an alternative in terms that have significance for the people who use this public service? Few students or parents will learn much about the future of higher education by reading even the summary.

Still, what does one make of what the report suggests? Sir Ron insisted in a Radio 4 interview yesterday that the issue of future funding options was not the main element. Nonsense. That is what the argument is all about.

The view that we need to increase participation to 40 per cent or more is uncontested. Moreover, most of that expansion should indeed be achieved by encouraging people (as in Scotland, America, or most other advanced Western nations) to undertake study short of a full-blown degree. But the past 10 years or so of rapid expansion have severely strained the system. Further reductions

in the cost of educating an average student would in some institutions imperil quality. In order to achieve that further expansion while maintaining excellence, we need to work out a politically acceptable way of paying for it. We also need to establish the principles on which such a system must be based.

The report argues that neither government (ie, the general taxpayer) nor employers can afford the bill, even though both are clear beneficiaries. Students should bear the burden, where they can. Their earnings are considerably greater on average than those without higher education qualifications.

Quite right, but the report suffers from a certain disingenuity about who will actually end up paying. In many cases, where they can afford it, parents will pay. Bright, successful graduates, who are being eagerly sought by employers, will be able to insist that the company recruiting them either pays them more to enable loan repayment, or gives them a golden hello to kiss off the debt quickly. A measure of inequity of that kind is unavoidable. The important thing is that talented people who are less well off should not be discouraged, nor should they be prevented from attending the best universities. This can be achieved either by Sir Ron's various routes, or the apparently preferred route being adopted by the Government. Which route you choose depends on how much money you want to raise for higher education, and how quickly.

But step back a moment. The very phrase "best universities" goes to the heart of what this report avoids discussing. Any honest vision of the future must accept that we are moving towards an essentially American-style system, in which there are three tiers of institution. The first is a kind of Ivy League of top-class research and teaching institutions. Some of those are pondering whether they will need to levy even higher fees. The second tier will be, in effect, local universities: in order to keep costs down, students will increasingly attend a university near

their home, get a part-time job, and diminish the burden on their parents. The third tier will be colleges (and this is where the next phase of expansion must really happen) which teach sub-degree level courses, often vocationally oriented, often to mature students. Nothing is gained from side-stepping this description of the future: it is the direction in which we are heading, and we should be frank and open and happy about it. It is part of the business of modernising Britain.

## The feeling is mutual – for now

Nationwide Building Society voters may or may not have done themselves a service as savers and borrowers by fending off the "de-mutualisation". Time will tell whether the Nationwide board and staff manage to outperform the former building societies which have turned into banks. And time is precisely the point those voters have done us all a service by preserving a vital element of competition in the financial system. Mutuality is not of itself preferable. Let's now see whether over the next few years the Nationwide can, not having to distribute profits to shareholders, offer cheaper mortgages or extra benefits to savers.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Oxford must ease pressure on students

Sir: I had tutorials with Sarah Napuk in our first year of Oxford ("Family blame Oxford for student's death", 22 July). In one of the last conversations I had with her, she told me she had been told to work 12 hours a day.

I do not deny that Oxford attracts perfectionists and those already prone to depression. But since such people will always form a very high percentage of those accepted by the university, tutors who refuse to recognise that they must offer high levels of support reveal the utmost arrogance and irresponsibility.

I do not blame the counselling services, but rather the unrepresentative exam system and the university's refusal to monitor or discipline its tutors over their standards in teaching, or the pressure they place upon students, or, in some cases, their repeated sexual harassment of students.

For me, Finals were a test of stamina and my short-term memory. By the arrival of my exams I was unable to eat anything but yoghurt or soup. I gained a 2:1 and not the First I was repeatedly told I was capable of. If I had not been able to win awards from my college, I would feel that my three years of hard work and a final year of enormous stress had been totally ignored by Oxford.

In 1999 one of the seven history papers will be replaced by compulsory course work. This is wholly inadequate.

SOPHIE DODGEON  
Oxford

Sir: As a final year undergraduate in French at Exeter college, Oxford, I'd like to offer some thoughts on what depresses me most as next year's summer exams begin to loom. Your article on Sarah Napuk, whom I knew all too fleetingly, addresses many issues but ultimately offers far too blurred a picture. I'm afraid that the city of mist and Morse may soak up rather too easily the vocabulary of "tragic wastes" and slip away unchanged.

In Sarah's subject, history, and in my own, the degree that you receive after three years is based almost entirely on two weeks of examinations. You might have thought this a little strange in an institution that is supposed to groom the next generation of researchers, where a course-work component would seem more appropriate a test.

Yet unlike in virtually every other university in the land, course work is minimal, optional and in no way recommended. Instead, you live in dread of that last frantic fortnight which has nothing whatsoever to do with careful, thorough argument and everything to do with brash verbal charlatanism. Any remaining confidence in the system finally ebbs away when you hear how your scripts are marked.

One fellow, a leading English critic, recently decided a borderline case by declaring in a markers' meeting: "This boy has a beautiful mind." Knowing that your future depends on this silliness is not easy, especially if you are female (the percentages repeatedly favour male candidates) and if expectations are high.

JIM CHESTERS  
Hull

Sir: A possible cause of Oxford student Sarah Napuk's death is a course structure in which by far the



most significant assessments are the Finals, those examinations which test everything learnt over the past three to four years, which are effectively a test of memory and ability to cram, rather than of real knowledge and aptitude.

On the other hand, modular courses, where the examinations are taken throughout the course, reduce the stress of the final term by spreading it out over the whole course. Modular courses feel more rewarding because once a module is examined, that part of the course is done. This does not mean that modular courses are any easier.

With traditional courses, it is possible to get away with doing very little until the final term – this is not so with modular courses, which demand steady work throughout, all of it counting.

ALEX MACFIE  
Llanddewi Rhydderch, Gwent

Sir: Academic pressures on students at Oxford University are indeed unreasonable. There are a number of reasons why I would not recommend an Oxford education: one of them would certainly be the way the university's examinations are structured.

I graduated from Oxford in 1988 with a Second Class honours degree in modern history. For at least a decade afterwards I would occasionally, on waking, be alarmed by a momentary, but very real, fear that I had not yet sat my Finals. Frankly, I would rather have attended a more progressive university.

COLIN ATTENBOROUGH  
By: Cambridgeshire

expectations of their parents and their school to do well academically.

The sole blame should not rest with the university system. Our culture prizes success too highly. Failure under such circumstances is sometimes undurable.

HILARY ELLIOTT  
Cambridge

Sir: It is disappointing to have the name of Ian Hyde included in an article concerned with student suicides ("Talent that went to waste", 22 July).

The Coroner recorded an open verdict on Ian Hyde. He was a man of great talent and was well on top of his academic work and enjoying it. He was popular with his contemporaries in college, greatly liked by his tutors, and strongly supported by a loving family, all of whom continued to miss him. He enjoyed Oxford. Our grief and his memory deserve better respect.

Professor K. A. McLAUCHLAN, FRS  
Tutor in Chemistry  
Hertford College, Oxford

### Apollo fire

Sir: Your Science Editor is mistaken when he states ("Mir must wait to take place in history", 18 July) that "the Apollo 1 module caught fire 10 minutes before it was due to take off". There was no intention for the module to take off; the crew were involved in a ground-based practice run.

COLIN ATTENBOROUGH  
By: Cambridgeshire

Sir: Long before coming to Oxford or Cambridge children are often put under great pressure by the

### Carrying the can for US in Bosnia

Sir: Do you remember how the Americans went into Vietnam to rescue the good from the bad, to stop the fighting, to prevent invaders pouring over the dividing line of a divided country, and to keep the Russians and Chinese out?

And the installing and unseating of local rulers, and the elections which never carried conviction, and the deadlines that kept going by, and the appallingly bad military intelligence? And the faith that a piece of paper would keep everyone safe at the end, when the last Americans had been helicoptered off the roof of the embassy, leaving their friends staving disconsolately up?

Bosnia is beginning to look like a more complicated re-run. Not one boundary, but many; not one or two local rulers, but dozens, and a shared language and history with but a single thought: to get back to the fighting again. But this time the departing American forces will leave the rest of us – British, French, Italian, Russian – carrying a can with an American name on it: Dayton. The Bosnian Serbs did not really accept Dayton at the time, where they were steamrollered. And they don't accept it now. And they are the largest group.

However, they are no longer the best armed. That is the Muslims: Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states will be left as their lifeline, paying for more and more American

weapons to ensure they "keep up with the Serbs". They will presumably still have with them the American firm of mercenaries which has been arming and training them against the Christians.

WAYLAND KENNETH  
(Lord Kennet)  
House of Lords  
London SW1

### Ludicrous legacy of Henry VIII

Sir: I am at a loss to understand why the Rev Peter Hawkins finds it curious that Tony Wright MP, should "ridicule the Church of England's position on remarriage after divorce" (Letters, 21 July). The stance taken by the Church of England is one which invites ridicule from those of us who look for just a little logic in an argument.

While Mr Hawkins is careful to draw a distinction between the (Roman) Catholic Church in England and the established Church of England, reference to Henry VIII in the context of the present debate over a possible remarriage of the Prince of Wales is far from ludicrous.

Mr Hawkins would do well to remember that the title Defender of the Faith was bestowed on Henry VIII by the Pope in Rome, for his defence of the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church against the "heresies" of Martin Luther – many of which now inform the beliefs of the mainstream "Protestant" churches

including the Church of England. The Doctrine of Papal Supremacy, central to the Faith, brought to England by St Augustine, was ably defended by Henry VIII until adherence to it became personally and politically inconvenient.

I find it more than a little curious that 500 years after Henry VIII's act of political expediency the church, monarchy and Parliament in this country can find themselves in knots debating the fitness of otherwise of the heir apparent to inherit a title which must have lost any meaning at the point when the Church of England came into being.

Accepting for the purpose of this argument that the title retained any form or substance following the excommunication, or death, of its original holder, there can be nothing inconsistent in any of his heirs or successors following his example and accepting it on the basis that it is short for "Defender of those tenets of the Faith that I may, from time to time, find it convenient to uphold".

ROSEMARY WATSON  
Walsham le Willows,  
Suffolk

### Moth on the Tube

Sir: The moth that E C Bradley saw on the underground recently (Letters, 21 July) sounds like a Cinnabar moth.

Found in meadows and wasteland, they appear May to July. Twenty five years ago there were a large number on a certain spot between Lynskey and Doddington in Kent.

HELEN SYKES  
Ashdon, Essex

### Turn a deaf ear to beggars

Sir: Being profoundly deaf myself, I read your report of the plight of the deaf and mute Mexicans who were lured to New York and pressed into beggar gangs ("Slaves of New York freed", 21 July). I assumed it couldn't happen here; I attributed it to an explosive and violent culture of a socially backward country.

However, two days later, I was having afternoon tea in a cafe in central London, close to Oxford Circus, when an individual entered the premises and started handing out plastic jewellery and a note to people at each table. The gist of the note was: "I am unable to speak and bear in a world of voices and music; please generously buy this trinket." I challenged him with my best (and angry) British Sign Language and he muttered "Don't talk" and slunk off.

Please do not be taken in by these people. Please do not give them any money. They are not deaf or representative of the deaf. They exploit people's pity and prejudice (deaf people are, in the main, as educated, articulate and employable as their hearing peers) and damage all that has been achieved by the deaf community in the last 20 years – including stamping out this practice.

JOHN CONNORS  
London NW11

### Chequed out by Sainsbury's

Sir: It is not only cheques that take time to clear in this modern age (Letters, 21 July), I have recently opened an account with Sainsbury's bank.

I don't have a chequebook, but can transfer money from the Sainsbury's account to a nominated bank account. I can only transfer money to that one account, and the transfer is arranged over the telephone. In spite of this, and the fact that the transfer is a purely electronic one between the banks it still takes four working days for me to regain access to my money.

Into what limbo does it fall during this time when, apparently, neither institution is in possession of it – and neither am I!

G R A FLETCHER  
Hayling Island,  
Hampshire

### Governors in disguise

Sir: With a parliament for Scotland and an assembly for Wales on offer this September, what of England? Except for talk of future regional authorities, no referendum there.

For with a parliament exclusively for the English, the "West Lothian Question" would not arise. So, is it that the government of England already sits in London – albeit clothed in the guise of the UK parliament?

DAVID PAYNE  
Cardiff

### Royal prison

Sir: May I suggest a solution to the disposal of the royal yacht *Britannia*. It would be ideal for converting to a floating prison, for the better class of prisoner, of course.

HILDA CARTER  
Blennerville,  
Dyfed

# My word, what does it all mean?

Teledildonics, affluenza, kidult... Some of the additions to the Oxford dictionary are truly baffling. William Hartston tries to decide what they tell us about life in the Nineties

**H**e swills lager and eats in Indian restaurants; she reads *Mills & Boon* and buys her frocks at *Laura Ashley*; and they both get about on *Rollerblades*. That, at any rate, is the picture that emerges of the average British couple of the Nineties from the new volume in the Oxford English Dictionary Additions Series (OUP, £20). With *garam masala*, *karma*, *bhaji*, *Madras curry* all washed down with a glass of *last*, it looks as though the compilers have decided that Indian food is here to stay. Since *Cooranga* was first spotted in 1852, and its present spelling dates back at least until 1960, this is clearly a dish our lexicographers have been chewing over for some time. Even so, it has done better than *Lynnewold*, the ill-fated English blue cheese which was withdrawn from sale in 1992 and only now makes its posthumous entry in the pages of the dictionary. Another thing that went out in 1992 was *nineteen ninety-two* (which the dictionary helpfully tells us is "usu. written 1992"). It was used to designate the implications of the creation of a single European market and did not arrive until 1993 anyway.

The chaps at Oxford do seem to take their cheese very seriously, with *Cambozola* also

making its first appearance, but you cannot help feeling that they do not really like the stuff when you read their entry for *mascarpone*. Apparently, the word derives (according to C. Battisti's *Dizionario Etimologico Italiano III*, 1975) from the Latin *manuscapere*, "to take in the hand, to masturbate". A comparison is suggested with the Southern Italian phrase *per ricotta* "to masturbate" (literally, "to make ricotta"). Perhaps it is better to stick to English foods, though the compilers seem also to have been unduly cautious about *Lancashire hot-pot* ("a dish of meat, onion and potato, resembling Irish stew") which finally claims its place 99 years after its first citation.

Back with our hypothetical couple, her *Laura Ashley* and *Mills & Boon* tastes hardly give her the cred of a true *Essex girl*. She is probably a bit of a *born-again happy-clappy* in her spare time. Hardly the sort of *bodacious* object to induce a *feelgood factor* in our *lager lou*'s dreams. No wonder that the Oxford lexicographers have decided to add another definition to those already existing for the word *marriage*. It is now also "an antique object assembled from components differing in provenance, date, etc".

While there is no surprise at seeing such neologisms as *chology*, *post-structuralism*, *log-on*, *e-mail* and *cyberspace* claiming their places in the dictionary, there is also a large number of entries which have evidently been around for a long time (often in medical text-books) but which have only now been deemed worthy of reaching a wider audience. Since we are all so much more comfortable nowadays with talking about our formerly vulgar, bodily parts, we are permitted at last to gaze upon the words *anococcygeal*, *anogenital* and *anorectal* (whose first citations date back to 1881, 1909 and 1884 respectively) without feeling guilty. Of the other words beginning with "ano", it's good to see *anorectal* listed with its modern meaning: "stang (derog.) A boring, studious or socially inept young person." This is evidently more derog. than *train-spotters* which is "a person who enthusiastically studies the minutiae of any subject; collector of trivial information".

I have always wondered, incidentally, how lexicographers decided whether something is "derog." or "usu. derog.". I am reminded of a recent dictionary of American slang which listed the phrase "bald-headed-chicken-fucker" as "usu. derog.". In the new Oxford volume, the only *usu. derog.*

expression I have so far found is *fag hag*.

Quite apart from the new words, it is good to see so many old words making a comeback. There is a splendid sense of lexicographical anachronism seeing the ancient *Molly-house* (a public house, tavern or private house used as a meeting place by homosexual men) and *fly girl* (a lewd or sexually promiscuous young woman, esp. a prostitute) jostling for space alongside Stella Gibbons's 1932 invention of *mollie-cote* (having sexual intercourse) and the modern *bumble-rupper* (dating back to 1980) and *G-spot* (1982).

Perhaps the most up-to-date reference of all, however, comes under the word "labour", where we are told: "Delete *Now rare* and add later examples." They are talking, of course, about the verb "to

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## Labour must save the people, not their marriages

**G**ouch! Or so the *Daily Mail* thought. The Lord Chancellor, it reported, has thrown his weight behind a government initiative to strengthen marriage: "And this from a man who famously 'stole' the wife of a cabinet colleague, Donald Dewar." What's more, this pro-marriage initiative is revealed in a week when Clare Short... oh, forget it.

Well, is it a Back to Basics fiasco all over again? Not quite. It wasn't Lord Irvine's initiative at all. In all the pre-election noise of mid-March, an announcement from the then Lord Chancellor went entirely unreported. In almost his final act, Lord Mackay handed out £500,000 to 13 pilot projects "with the potential to reduce the incidence of marriage breakdown... I am confident that all of them will make valuable and positive contributions."

His curious choice of marriage-saving projects includes some that are distinctly bizarre. Take, for example, the grant to "A media campaign to change the culture of marriage" run by a Christian group called Marriage Resource. Media-wise they are not. (They had not heard of Melanie Phillips, whose lone voice calls for a moral revolution in every column.)

I asked the organiser, Richard Kane, what change he had in mind. "Oh, a total cultural shift," he said with fervour.

"We're going to run a campaign to change attitudes, like the Clinck Click campaign for seatbelts." Clinck Click married in handcuffs? So how will they launch this on the media? Their grant is for radio advertisements featuring scenes like these: "He: Darling, I'll do it! She: Don't you dare, darling... He: Oh, but I will, darling. She: Darling, that is the prize piece from our wedding dinner set... without it the collection would be... (FX smashing sound!) ... Worthless!!! Voice: Over Why the irrational behaviour? Why is she acting like this? What is the problem? Is it something he said? Is it something he hasn't said?... If you'd like to know more about how to make your marriage work call 0171 316 0808 and we'll send you a useful information pack."

Where are these ads going out? Premier Radio, the London Christian radio station with, not surprisingly, the smallest audience, 0.3 per cent of listeners. This must be one of the strangest government grants ever. What's more, Marriage Resource also won a second grant of £75,000, to launch National Marriage Day - the mind boggles. Half the grants were given to Christian groups, reflecting Mackay's own West Fleet beliefs.

Some of the projects are eminently sensible - a new national helpline run by Relate, an all-black counselling service in Brixton by London Marriage Guidance and a scheme to train health visitors to spot post-natal depression and marital tension in new mothers. Others are well-meaning but dotty - the Christian group offering pre-marriage courses for couples who do not marry in church. (They hadn't had any takers yet when I called, but were leaving leaflets in libraries and GPs' surgeries.) By the time Lord Irvine took office, these grants had been disbursed - so it's hardly his fault.

So far, this Government has been briefly

**Polly Toynbee**

**So far, the Government has been breezily free of the moralising that it toyed with before the general election**

Gone is all that Tony preaching which thinly veiled the nakedness of their policies; instead of family values, we have a national child-care strategy (or at least the embryo of one).

But some relics of the old regime remain. Lord Mackay's quaint view that marriages are made in heaven and can be "saved" like lost souls is enshrined in the language of the new divorce law, with its paradoxical talk of preserving family life. This will force all couples to attend an "Information Session" when they first sue for divorce. What will that consist of? Five trial versions have just begun, testing out one-hour sessions. Since the trials are voluntary, they will only reflect those already amenable to advice. This whole new lumbering apparatus, offering counselling to every divorcing couple, may turn into a very expensive and patronising national joke.

After all, how many divorces could have been "saved" with a spot more information? Would a "How To Make Your Marriage Work" information pack have helped Charles and Diana? Would pre-marriage counselling have saved Dorothy from Casablanca? Or rescued Albee's George and Martin from one another? Clinck Click, they were all locked together or "saved" as Lord Mackay would have it.

It's not that marriage guidance is a waste of time - as Relate's long waiting lists testify. "Non-prescriptive", Relate doesn't urge people back into marriage, but often helps them separate. The point is how much better they feel, not whether more couples stay together. There is still time to change. Mackay's divorce law, scrap compulsion and give the money saved to cash-strapped Relate, where couples are queuing up to go of their own accord. As for compulsion, well, "Come in Mr Bluebeard, do sit down. Now have you ever considered Marriage Guidance?"

Labour must save the people, not their marriages

## Gunboat diplomacy for the 21st century

**Let's strengthen the Navy, even at the expense of the Army, argues Christopher Bellamy**

**T**he first phase of the Government's "Strategic Defence Review" is nearly complete. Never before has Britain conducted a top-down review of security policy in this way, with the declared aim of reappraising the size and composition of the armed forces to meet foreign policy objectives - some of which are now a matter of choice. A paper setting out those objectives, signed by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, will shortly go before the Cabinet. The Government insists the review is not a cuts exercise. But the Defence budget is unlikely to be increased - and even if it is kept at its present level, hard choices have to be made.

In an essay, "Britain sounds the retreat", published on 15 April, I looked at some of the options. Britain's air forces looked fairly safe, because of the overwhelming importance of air power in every kind of operation, from a large-scale war such as the Gulf through to humanitarian aid, and peacekeeping. Therefore, the choice boils down to one between maintaining the first division. Army able to fight high-intensity war and cutting the Navy. Or cutting back on the Army further and putting more emphasis on the maritime dimension. Because the Army is currently actively involved in Bosnia and Northern Ireland and the Navy, by and large, is not, I said that if a choice had to be made, the Army had the better case.

Maybe I was wrong. The foreign policy objectives emerging from the Government's review, stressing the globalisation of society and the need to ensure security through diplomatic means, and to protect British and European interests worldwide, begin to suggest a return to a maritime strategy. Maybe, for Britain and the US, a new maritime era is dawning.

The new government manifesto leaves it little room for manoeuvre. It remains committed to Trident - the ultimate deterrent against attack on these islands with nuclear or equally horrible weapons, to collective security through an enlarged Nato, to Britain maintaining its seat on the UN Security Council, and thus to playing a prominent role in international peacekeeping. The Eurofighter project, like Trident, is exempt from the review.

The new government looks as if it will continue to ensure Britain plays a prominent role on the world stage - not necessarily punching "above its weight", as the old and overused phrase has it, but "at its weight" - which is not inconceivable. It is clear that we cannot continue to try to do everything - only the Americans can. The Defence Review will look at areas where Britain might specialise and do what it does best. For 50 years of the Cold War, the principal concern for European countries was a land-air battle in central Europe. Navies and sea-based aircraft were sidelined, used primarily to keep open the transatlantic sea lines of communication and to protect the submarine-borne nuclear strike forces. Now they have been freed from the immediate threat of a land invasion.

Consider the world as it is now and as it probably will be in 2010. The only military threat to these islands is from missiles with nuclear, chemical or biological warheads fired by unpre-

dictable and not always rational dictators. Trident, to deter the rational, is sea-borne and needs other vessels to protect it. The best way of shooting down incoming missiles, if deterrence fails, is over the sea. A Ballistic Missile Defence system, designed to shoot down missiles fired by the irrational before they reach these islands, is likely to have a strong sea-borne component.

Another compulsory task is the defence of British civilians abroad. There are currently 10 million British passport-holders living abroad, some in very unstable places. Last month provided a brilliant example of what can happen. The USS *Kearsarge*, a 40,000-ton amphibious assault ship, picked 2,000 foreigners out of Sierra Leone - including the British diplomatic staff. The sea not only covers 70

per cent of the planet; it is also a wonderful place to park concentrated slabs of military power. But only the Americans had the ability to carry out this operation.

Seventy per cent of the world's population lives within 100 miles of the sea. Navies are particularly good at deterring or coercing people without actually shooting them or filling their towns and villages with soldiers. Navies can "poise" offshore for a long time and provide "leverage". The role of the US Navy in heading off Chinese threats to Taiwan in the South China Sea in spring last year was a clear example of modern gunboat diplomacy. Navies can be used for keeping options open and signalling resolve. They can match the pace and tone of diplomatic activity in a unique way. Besides providing visible signals and, sometimes, neutral venues for talks, warships can also threaten to land troops anywhere along an extended shoreline. So they can tie down disproportionate numbers of land troops - the perfect kind of "preventive diplomacy" and "conflict prevention".

The neutrality of the high seas is particularly useful in delicate international situations. Last year, when the US wanted to have another go at Iraq, the Gulf states closed ranks and would not allow attacks from their territory. So the Americans launched all their strikes from the sea, with carrier-based aircraft and cruise missiles.



Cutting edge: Richard Strauss and a new addition to the brass section at Garsington

## the commentators

**The neighbours making a noise about Strauss and Haydn in civilised, rural opera-land don't know how lucky they are**

**john walsh**

skirting-board, legs propped, reading."

Now the dealers have heard about Ms Winterson's odd compulsion, they're unsure what to do about it. "We don't encourage this sort of behaviour," said Julian Rota, of the fantastically posh Bertram Rota bookshop. "People are welcome to sit and read for an hour or so, but there is a limit. Lying by the skirting-board is not something we encourage."

Over such a learning curve of noise, would I mind hearing some bars of Haydn being played just a hundred yards from where I sit *al fresco* with a large gin & it and faithful Labrador? Could I stand the gnawing racket of Mozart's jolly *Costume* to my ears on a summer evening zephyr? Could I hell. Ms Waud and her disobliging, opera-hating friends just don't know how lucky they are.

It

is a bad-tempered dispute deep in the heart of civilised, rural opera-land. And, much as I try, I can't sympathise with the lawn-mowing tendency. When I was young, we lived on Battersea Rise, the noisiest bit of the South Circular Road. To get to sleep you had mentally to come to the gloaming, down the lane that separates Ms Waud's handsome Georgian home from Garsington Manor, as the three sopranos are doing one of the quiet bits of Richard Strauss's *Die Aegyptische Helena*. I expect Ms Waud will explain that a Catholic ruling straight from the Vatican forbids them from digging up the Oxfordshire greensward before sundown. This opera-noise business is nonsensical. In case you missed the fine points, let me recap: South Oxfordshire district council is prosecuting Garsington Opera (run by Richard Ingrams's brother



Winterson: book lover

).

This morning's papers are

full of a shake-up. The nation's eyes are fixed on the rejected

schedules, the popular

programmes consigned to

*Listeners' Limbo*, the hardy

animals that have been

dropped, the news about the

gay disco that will open its

door in Ambrose in

September. Actually I haven't

a clue what this morning's

news brings about James

Boyle's revamping of the

nation's most revered radio

station. I can, however, offer a

small insight into what has

made Mr Boyle so jumpy of

late. It's *out* the leaks. It is not

the accusations of "clumming

down" the culture of Radio 4.

It's the wedding.

Mr Boyle is notoriously

clam-like when it comes to his

family life. He regards

personal inquiries as in

damnably bad taste and

prefers to stick to the minutiae

of producer delegations. But a

family event is pressing upon him. The tight-lipped Boyle is

flying off to America

tomorrow to attend the

wedding of his eldest son

Nicholas, 24, a Harvard

graduate, to Mary-Louise

Kelly, an Irish-American babe

who works for WGBH radio in Boston. The only fly in the ointment, apparently, is the wedding protocol, which

dictates that the groom's

father should change into

several different outfits in the

course of the day's

ceremonials. It is, apparently,

the prospect of an early

confrontation with the in-laws

that has put a furrow in his

noble brow. "Mr Boyle does

not like being dictated to

about what he wears."

confirms a voice at the R4

press office. "And since you

ask, oo, he will definitely not

be wearing a kilt."

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## Nationwide carpetbaggers sent packing

Members reject move to de-mutualise by three-to-one majority

Nic Cicutti  
Personal Finance Editor

Nationwide Building Society yesterday came a crushing blow to the carpetbaggers aiming to bounce it into a stock market flotation after its members voted overwhelmingly in favour of mutuality.

More than 1.3 million Nationwide members – out of 3.5 million eligible to vote – rejected five rebel de-mutualisation candidates standing for election to its board and instead backed the society's own choice for the board by a majority of almost three to one.

The vote received the endorsement of the Prime, Tony Blair, and has provided a breathing space for a number of other building societies under pressure to give up their mutual status.

Nationwide's candidates received an average of 950,000 votes each, compared to about 350,000 for pro-conversion candidates, led by Michael Hardern, a freelance butler. Mr Hardern personally received 333,976 votes.

Charles Nunnely, chairman of Nationwide, said: "Particularly against the background of massive speculation about conversion windfalls, this election result represents a tremendous endorsement of our strategy."

Brian Davis, the society's chief executive, added: "This election has been very important in establishing public support for mutual building societies. This is a clear turning point in the debate about the value that members see in societies that wish to remain mutual."

He promised there would be no retribution against Mr Hardern and his colleagues, who had

exercised their "democratic right" to stand for election. Adrian Coles, director-general of the Building Societies' Association, said: "This is a victory for the genuine member over the short-term greed of the carpetbagger. Without societies like Nationwide active as a competitive restraint on the banks, there can be no doubt that mortgages would be increased and savings rates lowered."

The BSA had feared that a victory for the self-styled "members for conversion" would lead to the final unravelling of mutual financial structures.

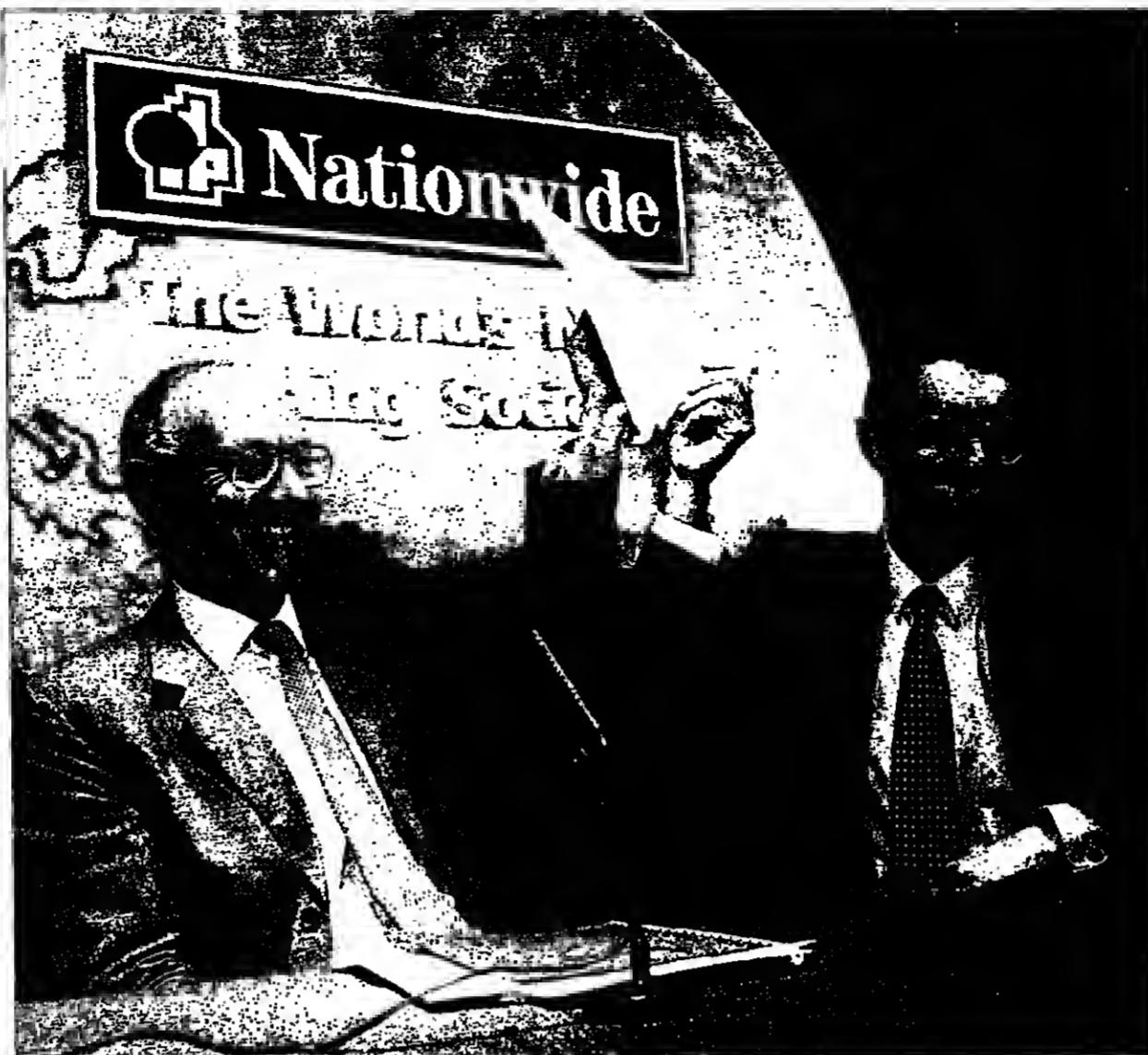
Both large and small building societies, traditionally Nationwide's bitter rivals in the battle to win savers and mortgage borrowers, joined in the general scramble to congratulate the board.

Christopher Rodrigues, chief executive of Bradford & Bingley, the UK's second-largest society, which many experts believed would be the next target for conversion candidates, said: "The majority of Nationwide members believe that the benefits of mutuality are worth preserving."

The decision of Nationwide members even received the seal of approval from Mr Blair. He said yesterday: "I was delighted to see the result and I think the right decision was made."

There were signs yesterday that building societies, many of which have been paralysed by speculators opening accounts to qualify for free shares, would seek to capitalise on the Prime Minister's support by seeking further protection against carpetbagging.

John Heaps, chief executive at Britannia, the third-largest



Charles Nunnely, the Nationwide chairman (left) welcoming the outcome of the vote yesterday alongside the chief executive Brian Davis. Some 70 per cent of members in the ballot backed the existing board

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

society, said: "They have hijacked the inherent democracy in building societies without any thought of member or consumer interests. It would be no surprise if steps were taken to ensure that this cannot happen again – in the interest of both the consumer and healthy competition."

Mr Nunnely said yesterday that Nationwide would be cam-

paigning through the BSA for changes in the law to prevent members being able to vote in elections and qualify for shares without an initial waiting period.

The results yesterday bring to a close an extraordinary grassroots campaign mounted by Mr Hardern and his supporters.

Members for Conversion was founded by Mr Hardern after

the flotation was announced 18 months ago of Alliance & Leicestershire, Woolwich and Northern Rock societies, plus the takeovers of National & Provincial and Bristol & West.

Together with Halifax, almost 15 million members of those societies have or will gain average windfalls worth up to £2,000 from conversion.

Mr Hardern and his sup-

porters campaigned for election to the Nationwide board by promising to deliver a similar payout to its members.

The vote is a triumph for Brian Davis, Nationwide chief executive. Although publicly supportive, many societies had complained he was too soft on carpetbaggers, who should have been denied the right to stand.

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Bid fears dismissed by Northern Rock

Tom Stevenson and Nic Cicutti

Northern Rock, the only building society currently seeking a stock market flotation, said yesterday it was confident of remaining independent as it confirmed the timetable for its 1 October deadline to convert to a bank.

The Newcastle-based building society dismissed talk of a pre-flotation bid as it announced a strong rise in profits for the six months to June, its last results announcement before it becomes a bank.

Leo Finn, managing director at Northern Rock, said: "We believe there is nobody that can run this business better than we can. There just aren't the cost savings available to make a bid worthwhile."

Mr Finn's comments came as Nationwide Building Society announced that its members had given the brush-off to the Michael Hardern-led rebels, who were campaigning on a platform of immediate conversion to a publicly-quoted company.

Meanwhile, Birmingham Midshires Building Society restated its ambivalent stance towards convertibility.

Mike Jackson, the Wolverhampton-based society's chief executive, said: "Clearly, the butler [Mr Hardern] didn't do it and the Nationwide membership have given a ringing endorsement to its mutual stance and we are pleased for the board."

Midshires was forced earlier this week to close its doors to all new accounts after being inundated with applications from potential carpetbaggers hoping to gain from a flotation or a takeover.

Mr Jackson added: "We shall wait for a few days to see if the frenzy dies down about

speculator activity. Our share account openings remain suspended. We have been consistent in never saying 'never' to anything and the board will continue to consider all the options available to itself." He added that the society was not for sale.

The smallest of the summer's financial flotations, Northern Rock forecast in its transfer document a market value of between £1.17bn and £1.33bn, which would leave it outside the FTSE 100 index. The other converting societies easily outstripped early expectations, however, so the outcome could be much higher.

But Mr Finn played down expectations that the society would use its new status to make acquisitions itself – doing so would involve waiving its own protection against takeover, which would only make sense in return for a very large deal.

Northern Rock, primarily a mortgage lender and deposit taker, said yesterday it had no intention in the short run of diversifying beyond its core activities.

Interim figures released yesterday showed a 10 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £97m after a reduction in the society's cost to income ratio. Net retail receipts were 75 per cent higher at £531m.

Mr Finn said: "I am pleased to announce another very good set of results for Northern Rock. The strong financial performance was very much in keeping with our tradition's strong profit and asset growth and falling unit costs."

The society claims a 7 per cent share of net new mortgage lending – £794m – around 2.5 times the amount that could be considered to be its "natural" share. Northern Rock's assets rose 13.6 per cent during the period to £14.6bn.

## High street surge makes rate rise likely

Diane Coyle  
Tom Stevenson  
and Nigel Cope

The fourth increase in the cost of borrowing in as many months looked increasingly on the cards after new figures yesterday showed the biggest surge in high street spending since the late-1980s boom.

The prospect of a further increase in interest rates by the Bank of England drove the pound to its highest level for more than eight years, to the dismay of exporters. Its index against a range of other currencies leapt a full point to 106.7.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer came in for renewed criticism from City experts for having failed to crack down on windfall spending in the Budget, putting all the burden of cooling the economy on interest rates. "The Bank's policy dilemma intensifies by the hour," said Kevin Darlington at Hoare Govett.

But Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, backed the Chancellor. Speaking to MPs on the Treasury Select Committee, he denied that Gordon Brown's unwillingness to target the consumer in the Budget was the main reason for the recent rise of sterling. Rather, he said fears about European Monetary Union were the main cause.

If you actually look at the timing of the upsurges ... against the core European currencies, they are mostly associated with developments on the Continent of Europe which are feeding this perception that the EMU process is now being driven by politics rather than on the basis of sound economics," he said.

The Prime Minister blamed the last Government for the dilemma. "Interest rates have had to go up because the previous Government failed to take the action necessary," Mr Blair said.

Despite the interest rate fears, the stock market made gains as share prices in the US surged for a second day. The FTSE 100 index was showing a bit of "irrational exuberance," Mr George said. It ended nearly 28 points higher at 4,874.5 after Wall Street had breached the 8,100 barrier in early trading yesterday.

Official figures showed that the volume of retail sales jumped 0.6 per cent last month even though it was the wettest June for a century. This would normally have depressed sales, but with consumers receiving £20bn of free building society shares during the month, the Office for National Statistics said the windfall gains had contributed to a leap in purchases of household goods.

This rose by 7.5 per cent in volume terms, and stood 21 per cent higher than a year earlier. The increase in the past three months was at 6.2 per cent, the

highest recorded since the figure started in 1988.

The ONS suggested that the windfalls had added an extra £150m to sales of household goods in June. This excludes spending on items like cars and holidays, which are recorded separately.

Sally Collinson of the Oxford Street Association, which represents local retailers and hotels, said sales had boomed with windfall-related spending offsetting lower spending by tourists constrained by the strong pound. Spending had been strongest in areas such as carpets and curtains. "We think it's the windfall factor," she said.

Comet, the electrical retailer, yesterday backed up recent comments from Dixons when it said sales of televisions, hi-fis and PCs had risen significantly since the Halifax flotation at the beginning of June.

A drop in food sales kept the

overall annual increase at 5.4 per

cent. Even so, underlying growth in high street sales volumes was the highest since late 1988.

There were signs in the quarterly survey by the British Chambers of Commerce that the strength of the domestic economy is outweighing weaker export orders. Both manufacturers and service businesses reported increased domestic sales in the latest quarter, and both were creating new jobs.

Consumer spending is building momentum. Once it picks up, it takes a lot to slow it down," said Kevin Gardiner, UK economist at Morgan Stanley.

Some economists drew comfort from the fact that the value of retail sales is growing slightly faster than the volume. But even optimists conceded an increase in rates from 6.75 per cent to 7 per cent was likely, with most predicting the move after the 6-7 August meeting of the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee.

Comment, page 21

## Exports at five-year low as strong pound takes its toll

Michael Harrison  
and Nigel Cope

Export orders are at their lowest level for five years, business leaders cautioned yesterday, as a further clutch of big industrial companies warned about the impact of the strong pound on profits.

According to the latest quarterly survey from the British Chambers of Commerce, exporters are facing their worst summer since 1992 with both manufacturers and service companies feeling the pain.

With interest rates expected to increase further, our concern is that sterling will continue to strengthen, causing significant damage to the UK's competitiveness, said Ian Peters, the BCC's deputy director-general.

His comments came as four

leading companies issued warnings about the strength of the pound. British Steel said that

the strength of sterling was putting profit margins under increasing pressure. Sir Brian Mofat, chairman, criticised the Government for relying on interest rates rather than fiscal policy to curb inflation.

Corus, the chemicals group, blamed the strong pound for its warning yesterday that first-quarter profits were "a little below" those of last year. Sir David Lees, chairman, said the rising pound was having an adverse impact, both on trading competitiveness and profit translation.

De La Rue, the banknote printer, added its voice to the debate at its agm. It said the strong pound and margin pressure in banknotes had resulted in first-quarter operating profits falling below those of last year.

Reuters has also been savaged by sterling. Its pre-tax profits for the first half of the year were down 3 per cent to £335m compared with a 12 per cent increase at comparable exchange rates. Analysts estimated that sterling's strength had reduced first-half profits by £50m.

The BCC urged Mr Brown to speed up the introduction of the new individual savings account to encourage consumers to save windfall gains instead of spending them and reduce the pressure for higher interest rates.

But the Trades Union Congress said that the Government could take the pressure off the pound by indicating that it was considering entry to the single currency at a "realistic and competitive rate of DM2.50".

## Boeing deal gets last-minute OK from Brussels

Katherine Butler  
Brussels

Brussels cleared the \$15bn merger between Boeing and McDonnell Douglas yesterday, averting a transatlantic trade war at the eleventh hour.

The merger plan won preliminary approval from the European Commission after the competition commissioner, Karel Van Miert, extracted last-minute concessions preventing Boeing from concluding further exclusive

supply contracts with airlines for the next 10 years and forcing the company to drop the exclusivity deals already signed with three American airlines.

The elation paves the way for the creation of the world's biggest aerospace and defence company and strengthens Boeing's position in the civil aviation market against that of Europe's Airbus Industrie, the US giant's only rival.

French political leaders, worried that the merger could dev-

astate the French aerospace sector, which is dominated by Toulouse-based Airbus, made it clear they were not satisfied with the concessions.

EU officials, however, expect the clearance will galvanise Airbus' partners, including British Aerospace, which has a 30 per cent stake, into pressing ahead with their own plans to transform the consortium into a single commercial entity.

Mr Van Miert said he was happy to recommend the deal.

"We insisted right up to the end we would block it if Boeing had not agreed to make changes. We got the remedies we wanted," he said.

The Commissioner admitted his office had been bombarded by callers from both sides of the Atlantic seeking to exert political pressure but insisted the case was at all times treated purely on competition grounds. In a thinly veiled criticism of President Bill Clinton, Mr Van Miert said he had been astonished to

hear US calls for the competition dispute to be referred to the World Trade Organisation as Washington had previously rejected EU calls for a competition arbitration forum to be set up alongside the WTO.

Boeing's chairman, Phil Condit, welcomed the positive recommendation from the Commission, saying Boeing had given ground to Brussels' demands for concessions because EU approval for the merger was in the long-term interests of its

shareholders, customers, suppliers and the 200,000 employees of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas.

He said the EU should have deferred to the US Federal Trade Commission, which approved the merger last month without conditions. But he conceded: "Had we proceeded without the approval of the European Commission we would have potentially faced large fines and potential harm to our customers."

However, amid complaints about the City's "over indulgence in process" which ran contrary to his entrepreneurial style, he re-affirmed his commitment to an initial public offering as his preferred course of action, though he would give no guidance on when the flotation would take place.

He also confirmed his backing for Salomon Brothers, the US investment bank which has been advising the float, saying it remained the exclusive financial adviser to the company.

A statement issued through Mr Ecclestone's legal adviser, Stephen Mullens, said: "In consultation with its financial adviser Salomon Brothers, my client has considered a number of alternatives. An initial public offering is my client's preferred course of action and progress is being made in preparing the company for flotation. No deci-

sion has ever been made with respect to timing. An announcement will be made in due course."

The commitment comes in spite of Mr Ecclestone's apparent frustration with lengthy City meetings which he felt were "not deeply productive". The public backing of Salomon Brothers is designed to end speculation that BZW and SBC Warburg were trying to muscle in on Salomon's position as exclusive financial adviser to the float.

The backing comes after Salomon last week threatened to remove BZW from the syndicate after claims that it had been working on a proposal that would have involved BSkyB taking a stake in Formula One.

Last week, it also emerged that SBC Warburg had been asked to look on certain options available to Mr Ecclestone. Plans for the flotation of Formula One, which is owned by family trusts of Mr Ecclestone's wife, first emerged in March. Comment, page 21

STOCK MARKETS
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# At last, a building society that puts up a fight

## COMMENT

In the Nationwide vote, we have probably witnessed the first significant backlash against the carpetbaggers. It is plainly neither moral nor justified for these people to be able to whip in at a moment's notice and share in the spoils of conversion'

Geoffrey Robinson, Paymaster General, could have been speaking for the previous government when he said recently that building society conversions were a matter for market forces and society members. In attempting to wash the new Government's hands of the matter, he profoundly misjudged both the mood of the country and the needs of that dwindling band of building societies which has chosen to resist the stampede, as yesterday's overwhelming vote for immunity at the Nationwide amply demonstrates. Brian Davis and his board have won as clear a mandate as they come against conversion, but without action the carpetbaggers will be back. The vote could easily have gone the other way, and may still do for others. The Government must act, and act swiftly.

To be fair on Mr Robinson, he's hardly alone in failing to spot the growing backlash against the likes of Mr Hardens. Nearly everyone believed the Nationwide would fall, incredible though the slate of pro-conversion rebels seems. Nobody could quite believe members were going to look a gift horse in the mouth and turn down the chance of free shares. How wrong they were. So what's really happened here?

People often forget that the Nationwide building society used to be called the Co-operative Permanent and it is still staffed full of Old Labour, thoroughly decent and honourable types. Plainly there's more to it than that, however. This is really the first time members have had an opportunity to hear something different. Other building

societies have caved in and failed to put the case against conversion. Nationwide argued it in compelling and forthright fashion.

In the Nationwide vote, we have probably also witnessed the first significant backlash against the carpetbaggers. It is plainly neither moral nor justified for these people to be able to whip in at a moment's notice and share in the spoils of conversion.

Building society membership should carry certain duties of trusteeship, for members are in effect guardians of assets built up over generations. It seems quite wrong that reckless, disloyal carpetbaggers should be allowed to rip in this way and steal the family silver.

The Government's starting point, therefore, should be to invest in membership certain duties of loyalty and longevity. This could easily be done, as Mr Davis and others point out, by introducing a two to five-year qualifying period for membership. The hatchet could be further bated down by reversing the ill-thought out Building Societies Act, rushed through by the last government in its dying moments, which gives all building society depositors equal rights of membership. The old distinction between long-term savers and short-term hot money might reasonably be reintroduced so as to make membership a reward for loyalty.

Another useful reform would be to up the level of support members need to stand for election from the present 50 to 500 or more. This would prevent a repeat of frivolous and disruptive campaigning like Mr Hardens.

Building societies obviously do still have

an important and constructive role to play in the provision of financial services, helping to ensure a more vibrant and competitive market place than would exist in a world populated only by banks. It is a tribute to Nationwide's members that they were prepared to vote for the public good over narrow self interest. Perhaps New Labour might learn a thing or two from them.

## The economy needs to cool down gradually

No shopping spree is ever for free and the one caused by the £38bn in shares from converting mutuals is fast coming home to roost. Unfortunately, it is industry that is being forced to pick up the tab.

Yesterday's figures for high street sales are uncomfortably upbeat and undeniably back to boom levels. They did not even include some of the goodies the windfall money is likely to be spent on, such as cars and holidays. Nor are the windfalls the only consideration. Wages are rising faster than prices, job vacancies are at the highest levels in recent memory, and the strong pound is boosting spending power on imports.

For the time being, home demand seems strong enough to offset falling export orders. The British Chambers of Commerce Survey was presented as a tale of struggling exporters, but the detail showed higher turnover, new job creation and skills short-

ages in both manufacturing and services. This presents a policy dilemma in the sense that raising interest rates to cool the domestic economy is driving the super, soaring pound ever higher. There has not been an appreciation of sterling on this scale since 1981, and we all know what happened to industry then. In another sense, though, there is no dilemma. If the economy is expanding fast enough to run the risk of higher inflation, it needs cooling down. The bigger the boom is allowed to grow, the bigger the bust that will follow.

Contrary to popular belief, both levers of macroeconomic policy, monetary and fiscal, are already being applied, a tight Budget and rising interest rates. Unfortunately, the UK is the only big economy in this position. The US is the only other country where growth is buoyant, but Alan Greenspan's testimony this week has made the prospect of higher rates across the Atlantic recede.

The reaction of the foreign exchanges means that British exporters must pay for the windfall-financed shopping boom.

This does not mean that the cost of borrowing will have to climb all that much higher. The Bank of England is likely to opt for a quarter-point increase in the next month or two, but it will proceed cautiously. As Martin Weale, head of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, explained to MPs earlier this week, running the economy is like taking a shower. If you find the water is too hot, you reduce the temperature. But there is a danger of turning the

water too far, too fast, and before you know it your shower has turned cold. The latest figures point to the need for another notch on the dial, but the trick is to turn gradually.

## Ecclestone's formula for clarifying issues

Bernie Ecclestone, or to be more precise his lawyer, helpfully decided to put the record straight yesterday about the on-off flotation of Formula One Holdings. Yes, a public offering remains the preferred course of action and, yes, Salomon Brothers remains Mr Ecclestone's exclusive financial adviser.

Considering this was Mr Ecclestone's first formal statement on the matter and considering the mountain of speculative press coverage his plans have attracted, it was a masterpiece of non-clarification. What's more, no sooner had the faxes stopped whirling than Bernie was back in the chancery, according to the London Evening Standard that he still thought about calling the whole thing off and placing financial advisers somewhere beneath used car dealers in the evolutionary chain.

Given the extraordinary antics of the investment banking community as it has fought to win the FOH mandate, Mr Ecclestone's disillusionment is understandable. Perhaps he should forget about a listing and stick to the more sedate and altogether less cut-throat world of motor racing.

# End to Guinness and GrandMet deadlock in sight

Andrew Yates

are set to formally reject these plans within the next week.

GrandMet is unwilling to sell off its Burger King and Pilbury food manufacturing operations to facilitate a three-way merger. However, GrandMet would consider alternative proposals to split Moët Hennessy into two.

The merged Guinness and GrandMet, to be known as GMG Brands, would control the Hennessy cognac business and LVMH's ownership of the Moët champagne operation.

"GrandMet and Guinness would not say no to the idea of acquiring the champagne business of Moët Hennessy and giving up the cognac side. We would also consider giving Mr Arnault a stake in an unrelated business within GMG Brands incorporating Moët Hennessy and our spirits business," Mr McGrath said.

Mr Arnault's acquisition of shares in GrandMet increases his leverage and is a way of getting around the negotiating table, according to sources. It is one clear indication to mid-size firms of settlement between the sides. We are completely open-minded to options that create value for our shareholders. But Moët Hennessy is not strategically

vital to GMG and our merger can continue with or without it. We are still analysing Mr Arnault's proposals carefully but it still appears they are not acceptable to us. We would not demerge any of our businesses in the foreseeable future," he added.

Mr Arnault has stepped up the pressure on GrandMet and Guinness to return to the negotiating table by arranging a series of meetings, beginning today with big shareholders in the UK companies, to outline his alternative proposals. He flew into London last night to have dinner with BZW, his advisers, ahead of the meetings.

"We are arranging some informal meetings with institutions and analysts which have expressed an interest in meeting Mr Arnault. But we are not likely to turn any new information to the table."

However, GrandMet's and Guinness's institutional shareholders are unlikely to be moved by Mr Arnault's proposals unless he significantly reduces his demands to have a 35 per cent stake in the combined spirits group.

The proposals put forward by Mr Arnault are clearly not acceptable," an institution said.



Lunchtime bash: Office workers from Broadgate in the City of London yesterday took part in a mock 'Gladiators' competition to help raise money for CARE, the international relief agency fighting poverty in 63 countries. Photograph: Keith Dobney

# Ohmeda sale to net BOC £1bn

Sameena Ahmed

BOC, the world's second largest industrial gases group, is aiming to strengthen its position in the continental European market with its big acquisition following the planned sale of its health business, Ohmeda, announced yesterday. Analysts said Ohmeda, which makes surgical anaesthetic gases, could fetch up to £1bn.

Sources close to the company say BOC's shopping list includes Messer-Griesheim, a private German group and the second largest industrial gases group in Europe and Sodergas, AGA, Europe's number four.

Danny Rosenkranz, BOC's chief executive, said BOC planned to invest in Ohmeda's growth, but did not rule out

questions. "We don't have any plans to buy anyone just yet, but we are a major player and we intend to stay one."

Mr Rosenkranz said BOC was in talks with a range of companies, which one he did not say, players in medical gases and anaesthetics, manufacturers with sales of £200m last year. However, sources believe the group is targeted at Abbott Laboratories, the US healthcare group, Zetec and Shire Industries from the UK and the American Chemicals group, Mallinckrodt, as possible buyers. Other possible buyers include Baxi and Astra.

Abbott, the leading contender, would not comment on its plans yesterday, but as the US's second-leading surgical anaesthetic gas group, it is planning a flotation in Germany.

face anti-trust issues if it bought Ohmeda. Ohmeda, which represents around a tenth of BOC's sales, has suffered badly from generic competition on its oldest gas, Forane.

Possible acquisition targets for BOC could include Messer, Germany's leading industrial gases business. The group posted sales of DM2.47bn (£823m) and DM33m profits in the year to January. Messer may also now contemplate a bid following the death, in May, of Dr Hans Messer, whose father founded the company, and who was known to oppose a sale.

The group's financial director, Michael Abbott, with a two-thirds stake, is known to be keen to sell Messer to a foreign buyer. Abbott, though, is planning a flotation in Germany.

# Treasury to take charge of 'super SIB'

The Government's aim to create an enhanced Securities and Investments Board was taken a step further yesterday with the announcement that insurance regulation was being transferred to the Treasury. Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary, will assume responsibility for insurance regulation, which will eventually move to the SIB.

Though BOC might find itself bidding against gas groups like Linde of Germany and France's Air Liquide, the world's biggest industrial gas player, it could prove the keenest buyer. According to one analyst: "BOC will have to take a deal with no real interests in Europe; it won't have a monopoly problem."

There have been calls for further legislation in recent weeks to protect the remaining building societies from pressure from carpetbaggers.

Ms Liddell said in a parliamentary answer yesterday that the new arrangements would "further enhance the existing

high standards of supervision and regulation of all financial sectors."

The Treasury said the Bank of England Bill, transferring regulation of the banking industry to the new SIB, would be introduced after the summer recess.

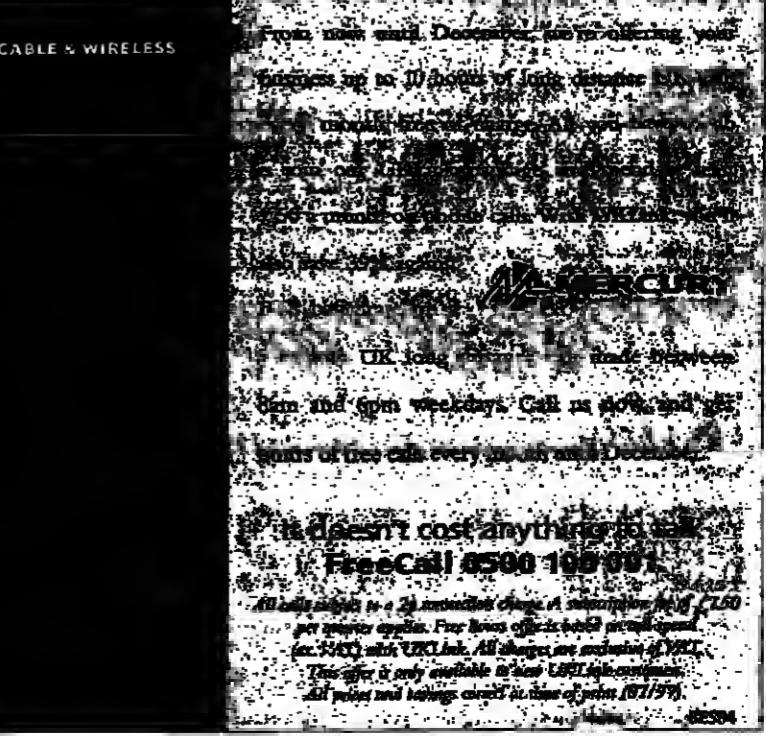
## Good start for Norwich Union

Norwich Union's worldwide new single premium life and investment business were up 19 per cent to £336m and worldwide new regular premium business down 2 per cent to £93m in the first six months of the year. Worldwide new business showed an annual premium equivalent growth of 7 per cent, despite being adversely affected by the strength of sterling. Alan Bridgewater, chief executive, said Norwich Union had made an encouraging start to 1997.

## Orange signs millionth subscriber

Orange, the mobile phones business, announced yesterday that it had signed up its millionth subscriber. The group has achieved rapid growth since it launched in April 1994. Last year, Orange doubled its customer base to 785,000 from 379,000.

**600 free minutes  
for your business.**  
(Time really is money.)



## business

# £55m Ramco bid for JKX frees Horton from second fiasco

Magnus Grimond

Sir Robert Horton, the Railtrack chairman and former chief executive of BP, was yesterday bailed out of a second fiasco in the oil sector when JKX Oil & Gas, a more recent oil venture of his, succumbed to a £55m bid from rivals Ramco Energy.

The all-paper offer of one of Ramco's shares listed on the Alternative Investment Market, for every 25 in JKX values the latter at 47.5p a share. Shares in JKX jumped 3.5p to match the bid terms yesterday, while Ramco moved ahead 30p to 21.875p.

The agreed bid marks the end of an unhappy stock market career for the group chaired by Sir Robert, ousted from BP in 1992. It was launched at 190p a share two years ago and the price initially soared to 265p on euphoria that JKX would cash in on existing oil and gas reserves in the Ukraine and Georgia.

In the event, the group was dogged by disaster, including the revelation that Peter Young, the disgraced former fund manager at Morgan Grenfell, had acquired a 19 per cent stake for £55m.

More fundamentally, it took much longer than expected to build a profitable business in the politically-troubled south-western corner of the old USSR.

Production, currently close to 11,200 barrels of oil equivalent a day, has not lived up to initial expectations and the failure of a large customer to pay for gas meant most production had to stand last year.

Yesterday it emerged that the group's joint venture with the Ukrainian government, the Poltava Petroleum Company, had suspended oil and gas supplies to another customer which had been overdue with payments on its resources in the long term". As a result, they had entered the discussions with Ramco.

The takeover is unlikely to lead to a bonanza for the JKX board, which collectively owns just 92,700 shares.

rights issue raised £14.2m in March at 34p a share mounted by new management. In February, the then chief executive, David Robson, was replaced by Bob McCracken, formerly with Mobil. The group also revealed that pre-tax losses had risen from £2m to £2.4m last year, despite a jump in turnover from £2.1m to £15m.

In June, JKX announced that it had signed a new deal to deliver gas to six regional gas distributors in the Ukraine, which has resulted in payments totalling some £746,000. However, the directors said yesterday that "further political and economic change in Ukraine could continue to make operations in Ukraine difficult for JKX and place considerable demands on its resources in the long term". As a result, they had entered the discussions with Ramco.

The takeover is unlikely to lead to a bonanza for the JKX board, which collectively owns just 92,700 shares.



Sir Robert Horton: Ramco bails him out of a second fiasco in the oil sector. He was formerly chief executive of BP

## NatWest will not face criminal charges over £90m losses

John Willcock

The Serious Fraud Office said yesterday that it would not be launching a criminal investigation into losses of £90m incurred by NatWest Markets in interest rate options earlier this year.

The losses at the investment banking arm of the bank led to the resignation of NWM's chief executive, Martin Owen, and other senior staff.

The SFO, which investigates cases of serious or complex fraud, said that in the NatWest case the public interest would best be served by the matter being dealt with by market regulator the Securities and Futures Authority. The SFA has the power to fine individuals and bar them from working in the financial markets. The SFO

decided not to proceed after studying an internal report commissioned by NatWest and carried out by Coopers & Lybrand, the accountancy firm, and Linklaters & Paines, the law firm.

The SFO has carefully considered the circumstances surrounding the losses incurred by NWM in the interest rate options business and has decided that an investigation with a view to a criminal prosecution is not justified," the SFO said.

The spokesman added that SFO had been kept fully informed throughout NatWest's own investigations of the losses.

"Whether the SFA will do anything is up to them," he said.

The SFA said yesterday that it was looking at the NatWest report. "We shall be studying the role of a number of individuals named within it," said an SFA spokesman.

"She [Ms Wright] takes the view that the public interest in ... this case would be more appro-

priately satisfied by the matter being dealt with by regulation."

A spokesman for NatWest said yesterday: "We welcome the SFO's decision. There has been a lot of speculation whether they [the SFO] would do anything over recent weeks. We have co-operated fully with them and we are glad it has been sorted out, as far as the SFO is concerned."

The spokesman added that SFO had been kept fully informed throughout NatWest's own investigations of the losses.

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## Digital delays keep Pace down

Cathy Newman

Pace Micro Technology, the TV set-top box maker, said yesterday it had yet to see any beneficial trade-down effect from the digital television revolution. The company also remained cautious about future growth in the market for set-top boxes.

Peter Morgan, chairman, who announced flat pre-tax profits of £18m for the year to May, said: "There is a delay of the digital wonderland, but it's no less certain to arrive."

He added that business had slowed in the second half of the year as a slight increase in the number of people buying digital set-top boxes failed to compensate for a decline in sales of analogue boxes. Pace makes the decoders and receivers needed in unscrambled satellite, cable and digital terrestrial television signals.

Mr Morgan also admitted that, despite winning a contract to develop set-top boxes for British Interactive Broadcasting, the interactive television company recently formed by BSkyB, BT, Matsushita and Midland Bank, Pace had not yet been informed how many boxes it would have to supply.

Pace said it had been hampered by consumers who had decided to wait until the launch of digital services instead of buying analogue boxes. Meanwhile, the company had suffered from a lower than expected subscriber take-up in countries where digital television was already up and running.

Analogue box sales were £32m in the second half of the year, down from £53m in the first half. Digital box sales only accounted for sales worth £70m in the second half, marginally up on £65m in the first half.

The lower than anticipated demand led to 29 redundancies this year out of a workforce of 1,000.

Shares in Pace closed down 13p at 53.5p.

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

# Buy-back to offset Reuter's pounding

Reuters' chief executive, Peter Job, must have been taking the long view yesterday when he said he did not see the strength of sterling as a problem. But in the short term at least, currency problems are undeniably a worry.

Pre-tax profits for the six months to June were down 3 per cent to £333m, and the pound – which yesterday reached an eight-year high against the mark – was fairly and squarely blamed. Although the company wouldn't put a figure on the damage done by sterling, it said profits were up 12 per cent at comparable exchange rate, which in effect means the strong pound took a £50m bite out of Reuter's profits.

Reuters can do little except sit it out and hope for better times. Shareholders may be well-advised to do likewise, especially since yesterday's announcement of a £200m share buy-back over the next 12 months. Rob Rowley, finance director, says Reuters has £1.1bn in cash he does not want to accumulate further.

A plan last year to give investors £613m via a special dividend formula was scrapped after the Government shelved related tax benefits. Mr Rowley would not be drawn on whether further cash will be returned to shareholders after this year.

Buy-back or no, there are tough times ahead for Reuters, with the prospect of a slug of additional expenditure over the next few years to combat the threat of the millennium computer time bomb. The company isn't giving estimates for the cost of the problem yet, which could cause a global computer meltdown if software systems fail to recognize the date at the beginning of the year 2000. Mr Rowley does promise more detailed explanations about the scale of the threat at a seminar for shareholders later this year, though.

In the meantime, a "millennium compliance programme" has been set up.

Leaving aside millennium and currency gloom, Reuters is still a market leader, and is continuing to enhance its existing product range. The 3.000 series, for example, combining up-to-the-minute price information with historical data on shares, bonds and the foreign exchange, has sold well since launch last year, and further developments to the product are being applied. A domestic

version has been established in the UK equities market, and a US model is planned.

If the pound continues to make life difficult for the company, there is always the possibility of lifting product prices. These have been held broadly constant for the past five years, but if currency worries persist, it may be something the company will look at.

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Buy-back or no, there are tough times ahead for Reuters, with the prospect of a slug of additional expenditure over the next few years to combat the threat of the millennium computer time bomb. The company isn't giving estimates for the cost of the problem yet, which could cause a global computer meltdown if software systems fail to recognize the date at the beginning of the year 2000. Mr Rowley does promise more detailed explanations about the scale of the threat at a seminar for shareholders later this year, though.

In the meantime, a "millennium compliance programme" has been set up.

Leaving aside millennium and currency gloom, Reuters is still a market leader, and is continuing to enhance its existing product range. The 3.000 series, for example, combining up-to-the-minute price information with historical data on shares, bonds and the foreign exchange, has sold well since launch last year, and further developments to the product are being applied. A domestic

version has been established in the UK equities market, and a US model is planned.

If the pound continues to make life difficult for the company, there is always the possibility of lifting product prices. These have been held broadly constant for the past five years, but if currency worries persist, it may be something the company will look at.

Pre-tax profits for the six months to June were down 3 per cent to £333m, and the pound – which yesterday reached an eight-year high against the mark – was fairly and squarely blamed. Although the company wouldn't put a figure on the damage done by sterling, it said profits were up 12 per cent at comparable exchange rate, which in effect means the strong pound took a £50m bite out of Reuter's profits.

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# Agassi stopped by Gimelstob

## Tennis

Andre Agassi suffered another defeat in his latest comeback when his American compatriot Justin Gimelstob beat him 7-5, 6-2 in the first round of the Infiniti Open in Los Angeles.

The setback, on Tuesday, was the sixth time the former world No 1 has lost his first match of a tournament this year and casts doubt over whether the winner of three Grand Slams can ever recapture his old form.

"It will take a while to get that confidence back – to prove to myself I can beat these guys day in and day out again," he said. "It's just a grind. You've got to pay the price and do it. I certainly am committed to that challenge and I will do it."

"At this stage of the ball game it makes me feel frustrated and like I cannot do it. So it's a tough hump to get over. It doesn't get any easier week after week," he said.

Agassi has returned to competition after a 10-week lay-off because of a right wrist injury, but lost to Doug Flach in Washington DC last week.

"I think of kept getting the lead but not remembering how

to win," said Agassi, who has dropped to No 32 in the world.

"That should come along. It's like a woman who's been pregnant 10 months," he said. "All of a sudden it just happens."

The 20-year-old Gimelstob, a tour newcomer who developed his game at the University of California at Los Angeles, was elated over the biggest victory in his career.

"I had goosebumps when I walked on the court. I was so excited," Gimelstob, who is ranked 103rd in the world, said. "I feel the same way now. To have a win like this in front of my friends and family on my home court feels great."

"Obviously, he's not at the top of his game right now but I have so much respect for him," he said. "But I competed well, played a good match and things went my way."

"I'm not going to say he played the match of his life and I beat him. When he plays the match of his life, you're just praying for rain."

Gimelstob captured the opening set, breaking Agassi in the final game for the third time when he cracked a cross-court winner on his fifth break point to end a 17-point game.

Agassi took a brief lead with an immediate break in the second set, but Gimelstob broke twice to take a 3-1 advantage.

Gimelstob fought off a break point in the seventh game to go ahead 5-2 before closing out the one-hour, 27-minute match when Agassi committed his fourth and fifth double-faults on the final two points of the match.

Agassi was asked if anything positive came out of the defeat. "It's just another match and we'll take the next step from here," he said. "It didn't set me back as much as I didn't break through. It's not going to take one match to win. It's just another match and next time it will be much easier for me to not lose serve after getting up a break." In other matches top seed Goran Ivanisevic, of Croatia, beat the South African Neville Godwin 7-6, 6-3, third seed Mark Philippoussis of Australia hit 20 aces to overcome Brazil's Roberto Ishai 1-6, 6-3, 7-6 and the fourth seed and twice champion, Richard Krajicek, fired 14 aces to defeat Marcos, Ondruska of South Africa 6-4, 6-4. Jim Courier, the sixth seed from the United States, overcame South African Grant Stanford 7-5, 7-5.



All at sea again: Andre Agassi during his first-round defeat in the Los Angeles Open

# Strategic advice from Cole is to relish the race

## Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

It is a measure of the calibre of horse that will turn up for duty in the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Stakes at Ascot on Saturday that the consider of the field is a Group One winner. Strategic Choice may have won across Europe, in Britain, Ireland, France and Italy, he may have dead-heated for third place with Helios in last year's Japan Cup, yet he can still be backed at 50-1.

The average official rating of the athletes before it is at the weekend will be 125, which puts much meat on the claim that this is the highest quality

contest seen for some time. "And I've got good form with the whole field," Paul Cole, Strategic Choice's trainer, said yesterday. "I've beaten Singapuri with Posidonia in last year's Princess Of Wales's Stakes at Newmarket, and Strategic Choice himself ran him to lengths and a hit in Japan when he dead-heated with Helios. Shantou beat the only two and a bit lengths the other day [in the Gran Premio di Milano at San Siro] so we've got very good form. It's just that there is nothing to suggest he can turn these little distances around."

"I'd have to be a complete idiot to say I fancied our chances, but I think we have a chance of getting into the first four."

Helios was well backed yesterday for the King George as doings grew about Posidonia's participation at Ascot due to the

pad he has just had built. The architect's scrolled plans are not believed to have involved much use for corrugated iron.

While Strategic Choice, at six, is the oldest horse in the race, the youngest, Kingfisher Mill, is the sole standard bearer for the Classic generation, a fact which Cole believes prevents the King George from being one of the truly great races. "I think the race is missing something because it would be nice if there

was a proven Group One three-year-old in the race," he said.

"On the other hand, horses are very unsound beasts and we're likely to assemble in one piece, this, catalogue of field. I don't think the media and the public realise that trainers are battling to keep their horses sound 365 days a year. To assemble so many good horses in one race is very rare and we ought to sit back and relish it."

Strategic Choice was third to

Lammtara and Pentire in the King George two years ago and will struggle to repeat that position. "There are question marks about some of the others but they're such good horses that they will be difficult to beat," Cole said. "My feeling about Helios is that he is not at his best on this fast ground. He is very much a French horse in that respect. On the other hand, the faster the ground the better for Strategic Choice."

It is a French race which has come to overshadow the King George, and Cole considers that even an encounter as potentially thrilling as Saturday's cannot compete with the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe simply because of its place in the calendar.

"The King George is still a massive race," he said. "But the reason that the Arc is such a great race is that everybody has had time to savour all the horses by the time it comes along."

**RICHARD EDMONDSON**  
NAP: Outsourcing (Bought 2.00)  
NAP: Little Acorn (Sandown 4.25)

You build up knowledge, an acquaintance and association with these horses and the Arc is like coming to the end of the storybook. This is a fantastic race for bloodstock, but the Arc provides the finish of the book and that's why it is a little more exciting."

## RESULTS

### BATH

2.15-1. PAY HOME (2nd Mean Dyer) 7-1;  
2. Maserforna 8-13 3rd; Pepper 7-1;  
8 ran, Hd, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Kingstone, Total: £210.10, £1.60, £1.10, £1.30, Df: £5.80.

2.45-1. BLUE IMPERIAL (4th Harry) 5-2

1st, 2. Samara Song 3-2, 3. Seedy Tom 5-1;

7 ran, Hd, 1st, 2nd, U Hill, Lambourn, Total: £3.60.

3.35-1. PINKY (13th IG Dancer) 5-1; 2.

2.25-1. 2. Dancer 5-1, 3. 8 ran, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th, 101st, 102nd, 103rd, 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, 119th, 120th, 121st, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, 127th, 128th, 129th, 130th, 131st, 132nd, 133rd, 134th, 135th, 136th, 137th, 138th, 139th, 140th, 141st, 142nd, 143rd, 144th, 145th, 146th, 147th, 148th, 149th, 150th, 151st, 152nd, 153rd, 154th, 155th, 156th, 157th, 158th, 159th, 160th, 161st, 162nd, 163rd, 164th, 165th, 166th, 167th, 168th, 169th, 170th, 171st, 172nd, 173rd, 174th, 175th, 176th, 177th, 178th, 179th, 180th, 181st, 182nd, 183rd, 184th, 185th, 186th, 187th, 188th, 189th, 190th, 191st, 192nd, 193rd, 194th, 195th, 196th, 197th, 198th, 199th, 200th, 201st, 202nd, 203rd, 204th, 205th, 206th, 207th, 208th, 209th, 210th, 211st, 212nd, 213rd, 214th, 215th, 216th, 217th, 218th, 219th, 220th, 221st, 222nd, 223rd, 224th, 225th, 226th, 227th, 228th, 229th, 230th, 231st, 232nd, 233rd, 234th, 235th, 236th, 237th, 238th, 239th, 240th, 241st, 242nd, 243rd, 244th, 245th, 246th, 247th, 248th, 249th, 250th, 251st, 252nd, 253rd, 254th, 255th, 256th, 257th, 258th, 259th, 260th, 261st, 262nd, 263rd, 264th, 265th, 266th, 267th, 268th, 269th, 270th, 271st, 272nd, 273rd, 274th, 275th, 276th, 277th, 278th, 279th, 280th, 281st, 282nd, 283rd, 284th, 285th, 286th, 287th, 288th, 289th, 290th, 291st, 292nd, 293rd, 294th, 295th, 296th, 297th, 298th, 299th, 300th, 301st, 302nd, 303rd, 304th, 305th, 306th, 307th, 308th, 309th, 310th, 311st, 312nd, 313rd, 314th, 315th, 316th, 317th, 318th, 319th, 320th, 321st, 322nd, 323rd, 324th, 325th, 326th, 327th, 328th, 329th, 330th, 331st, 332nd, 333rd, 334th, 335th, 336th, 337th, 338th, 339th, 340th, 341st, 342nd, 343rd, 344th, 345th, 346th, 347th, 348th, 349th, 350th, 351st, 352nd, 353rd, 354th, 355th, 356th, 357th, 358th, 359th, 360th, 361st, 362nd, 363rd, 364th, 365th, 366th, 367th, 368th, 369th, 370th, 371st, 372nd, 373rd, 374th, 375th, 376th, 377th, 378th, 379th, 380th, 381st, 382nd, 383rd, 384th, 385th, 386th, 387th, 388th, 389th, 390th, 391st, 392nd, 393rd, 394th, 395th, 396th, 397th, 398th, 399th, 400th, 401st, 402nd, 403rd, 404th, 405th, 406th, 407th, 408th, 409th, 410th, 411st, 412nd, 413rd, 414th, 415th, 416th, 417th, 418th, 419th, 420th, 421st, 422nd, 423rd, 424th, 425th, 426th, 427th, 428th, 429th, 430th, 431st, 432nd, 433rd, 434th, 435th, 436th, 437th, 438th, 439th, 440th, 441st, 442nd, 443rd, 444th, 445th, 446th, 447th, 448th, 449th, 450th, 451st, 452nd, 453rd, 454th, 455th, 456th, 457th, 458th, 459th, 460th, 461st, 462nd, 463rd, 464th, 465th, 466th, 467th, 468th, 469th, 470th, 471st, 472nd, 473rd, 474th, 475th, 476th, 477th, 478th, 479th, 480th, 481st, 482nd, 483rd, 484th, 485th, 486th, 487th, 488th, 489th, 490th, 491st, 492nd, 493rd, 494th, 495th, 496th, 497th, 498th, 499th, 500th, 501st, 502nd, 503rd, 504th, 505th, 506th, 507th, 508th, 509th, 510th, 511st, 512nd, 513rd, 514th, 515th, 516th, 517th, 518th, 519th, 520th, 521st, 522nd, 523rd, 524th, 525th, 526th, 527th, 528th, 529th, 530th, 531st, 532nd, 533rd, 534th, 535th, 536th, 537th, 538th, 539th, 540th, 541st, 542nd, 543rd, 544th, 545th, 546th, 547th, 548th, 549th, 550th, 551st, 552nd, 553rd, 554th, 555th, 556th, 557th, 558th, 559th, 560th, 561st, 562nd, 563rd, 564th, 565th, 566th, 567th, 568th, 569th, 570th, 571st, 572nd, 573rd, 574th, 575th, 576th, 577th, 578th, 579th, 580th, 581st, 582nd, 583rd, 584th, 585th, 586th, 587th, 588th, 589th, 590th, 591st, 592nd, 593rd, 594th, 595th, 596th, 597th, 598th, 599th, 600th, 601st, 602nd, 603rd, 604th, 605th, 606th, 607th, 608th, 609th, 610th, 611st, 612nd, 613rd, 614th, 615th, 616th, 617th, 618th, 619th, 620th, 621st, 622nd, 623rd, 624th, 625th, 626th, 627th, 628th, 629th, 630th, 631st, 632nd, 633rd, 634th, 635th, 636th, 637th, 638th, 639th, 640th, 641st, 642nd, 643rd, 644th, 645th, 646th, 647th, 648th, 649th, 650th, 651st, 652nd, 653rd, 654th, 655th, 656th, 657th, 658th, 659th, 660th, 661st, 662nd, 663rd, 664th, 665th, 666th, 667th, 668th, 669th, 670th, 671st, 672nd, 673rd, 674th, 675th, 676th, 677th, 678th, 679th, 680th, 681st, 682nd, 683rd, 684th, 685th, 686th, 687th, 688th, 689th, 690th, 691st, 692nd, 693rd, 694th, 695th, 696th, 697th, 698th, 699th, 700th, 701st, 702nd, 703rd, 704th, 705th, 706th, 707th, 708th, 709th, 710th, 711st, 712nd, 713rd, 714th, 715th, 716th, 717th, 718th, 719th, 720th, 721st, 722nd, 723rd, 724th, 72



# Ronaldo critical of Barcelona

## Football

Ronaldo, set to make his debut for Internazionale against Manchester United on Sunday, has criticised his former club, Barcelona, for demanding even more money than the £18m already paid to release him from his contract in Spain.

The 20-year-old Brazilian striker is now destined for the San Siro after the governing body of world football, Fifa, brokered a compromise deal between Inter and Barcelona on Tuesday, although Fifa says that the money paid so far does not constitute a transfer fee.

"How can Barcelona justify asking for more money?" Ronaldo asked. "When I signed my contract with Barcelona last year, it was because I knew that for four billion pesetas (£18m), I could leave. Now I want to know why that doesn't apply any more."

The two clubs have a week to reach an agreement on how much more Inter will have to pay — or Fifa will decide.

## Collymore confident of more success

Stan Collymore defended his record with Liverpool yesterday before setting his sights on terrorising Premiership defences with Aston Villa in the new season.

Brian Little's £7m club record signing denies that he failed to do himself justice at Anfield when he and Robbie Fowler scored 102 goals between them in two seasons.

And now Collymore is aiming to repeat his similar fashion in partnership with Dwight Yorke, who has looked in superb form with five goals in two pre-season matches for Wycombe and Partick Thistle.

Collymore said: "People say I left Liverpool without making the fullest impact, but in the first season myself and Robbie Fowler were the top partnership goal-wise in the Premier League. Then last season only Alan Shearer and Les Ferdinand of Newcastle scored more goals so I don't think my time at Liverpool was that bad. Now I'm hoping that playing alongside

Meanwhile, Massimo Moratti, the president of Inter, said Ronaldo will wear the No 10 shirt against United in the first leg of the Pirelli Cup, a friendly tournament arranged as part of Paul Ince's 1995 transfer to the Italian club from United. The second leg is on 30 July at Old Trafford.

Ronaldo added: "The president has made the right decision. The No 10 shirt was once Zico's and Pele's — how could I not be proud of wearing that? Now I know for certain that, all talking aside, I'm going to play for Inter. I knew that Fifa would respect my wishes."

Juminho's move to Atletico Madrid has brought an instant reward for the former Middlesbrough player, who has been recalled to the Brazilian squad for two friendlies in Asia next month.

The 24-year-old fell out of favour with the Brazil coach, Mario Zagalo, during Boro's Premiership campaign last season which ended in relegation. He subsequently sought a transfer to a leading Spanish club two days later.

Romario has changed his mind and will play for Valencia next season after all, it was reported yesterday. The striker, who has been on loan to the Brazilian club, Flamengo, had previously suggested that he would not return to Spain because he wanted to stay in Brazil to be close to his sons.

"I never thought I would leave Flamengo, but I am a professional," Romario was quoted as saying in the Spanish sports daily *Marca*. "The best thing now is for me to go and succeed with my Spanish club."

Romario did not say what had made him change his mind, but the Flamengo president, Kleber Leite, is believed to have persuaded him to fulfil his contractual obligations.

Ricardo, the Paris St-Germain manager, is to leave France at the end of the new season to return to Brazil, the French sports daily *l'Equipe* reported yesterday.

Ricardo, who joined PSG last season as coach after ending his playing career with Benfica, told club officials he did not want to renew his contract when it expires in June 1998. The former Brazilian international defender has been linked with Fluminense.

## Bristol clamp down on Corry

### Rugby Union

Bristol have threatened to take legal action against Martin Corry, their captain, if he tries to leave them this summer. Corry still has a year to run on his contract and the club have told the 23-year-old England international that he will not be going anywhere even though he is considering a deal to join Leicester.

Alan Davies, the coach, said: "He is either going to be in a legal dispute with us or he will play for Bristol next season. It is not good and the sooner we sort out some uniformity for the sport, the better. It has happened in soccer and we will not have clubs chasing players who are in contract." Corry said no decision on his future had been made and refused to comment further.

## Torrance upbeat over Ryder Cup qualifying

### Golf

Davies added that Bristol's leading talent, the former Lions and record-breaking Wales scrum-half, Robert Jones, will still be at the Memorial Ground despite overtures from Bath over the last few weeks. Davies said: "We are keeping Robert next season."

Bristol are also on the point of adding two new international signings to their squad next season. Both the players, who have played for their respective countries but who Bristol refuse to name, have been in protracted talks with senior staff from the Memorial Ground.

This comes in the wake of three new signings for the club in the Aberavon No 8, Steve Pearce, his club-mate, Gareth Barber, a scrum-half, plus the former Wales international lock, John Wakeford, from Cardiff.

Davies said: "John is well built

to provide quality ball and had a good season with Cardiff. I think he is the sort of player who will still be in the Welsh set-up.

Steve and Gareth have

made an excellent contribution with Aberavon in the Welsh Division Two and, given the opportunity to play at this level of

rugby, they will develop very quickly."

Bristol have already lost England lock Simon Shaw to Wasps and are still in negotiations with Bath who are

**The state we're in**  
Ken Jones on the unholy mix  
of sport and politics, page 26

# sport

THURSDAY 24 JULY 1997 • THE INDEPENDENT

**Hooray for Gooch**  
Essex and England stalwart  
bows out, page 26



## Liverpool join Newcastle in hunt for Ostenstad

### Football

ALAN NIXON  
AND CATHERINE RILEY

Liverpool have joined the bidding to sign Southampton's Norwegian striker Egil Ostenstad, who has long been a target for Newcastle United.

Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, wants the powerful forward as a partner for Robbie Fowler and is willing to beat Newcastle's offer of around £1m, which was turned down by the South Coast club earlier this week.

Kenny Dalglish, the Magpies manager, had lined up Ostenstad as Les Ferdinand's replacement, with Newcastle yesterday confirming that they have accepted a £2m bid for the striker from Everton.

However, Liverpool could win the race for Ostenstad if Southampton lower their £1m valuation. Ostenstad has been a success since his £1m signing from Viking Stavanger less than a year ago.

Ferdinand will meet Howard Kendall, the Everton manager, today to discuss a move to Goodison Park after Leeds and

Sheffield Wednesday said they were not interested.

David Pleat, the Wednesday manager, denied reports that he had made a £5.2m offer for the 30-year-old England international, while Leeds also said they had not tried to sign him.

Pleat said: "We have not made an offer. We are aware of many players' situations this summer, no more than that."

A Leeds spokeswoman, Liz Dimitrijevic, dismissed the club's interest in Ferdinand as "pure speculation" and said: "Les Ferdinand is not someone the manager is looking at."

Meanwhile, Tottenham Hotspur yesterday reaffirmed their interest if Ferdinand was to decide on a move back to London.

Newcastle insisted yesterday that the transfer of the Italian defender Alessandro Pistone has yet to be completed. Reports from Italy on Tuesday said a £4.5m deal for the 22-year-old Internazionale left-back had been agreed.

However, Freddie Fletcher, the Newcastle chief executive, said that although discussions had taken place with the Serie A side and the Italy Under-21

international, the transfer had not yet been finalised.

Aston Villa have agreed to split the difference and pay Leicester £1.35m for defender Simon Grayson. The clubs could not initially agree on a transfer fee which was set to be decided today by a tribunal.

Villa were offering £750,000 and Leicester asking £2m for their player of the year, but the two parties finally settled on a compromise figure after re-opening negotiations.

Birmingham have written off £1.4m in less than 48 hours with their decision to make winger

Ricky Otto available on a free transfer. Otto cost a then club record fee of £800,000 when signed by Barry Fry from Southend two and a half years ago.

It

follows

City's

loss

of

Mike

Newell

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selling

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Aberdeen

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after

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12

months

ago.

David

Sullivan

the

club's

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"Our

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